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The Cry of the Children
from the
Brick-Yards of England.

GEORGE SMITH



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THE CRY OF THE CHILDREN

FROM

THE BRICK-YARDS OF ENGLAND.



THE CRY OF THE CHILDREN
FROM THE
BRICK-YARDS OF ENGLAND

AND HOW THE CRY HAS BEEN HEARD;

WITH OBSERVATIONS UPON THE CARRYING OUT OF THE ACT.

BY
GEORGE SMITH, OF COALVILLE,
LEICESTER.


SIXTH EDITION

LONDON:
HAUGHTON & CO., 10, PATERNOSTER ROW.

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1879.

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I have travelled about, wife and children insulted and abused, lies circulated by thousands, malice to be seen in every action of my opponents, though, sorry to say, I have worn the garb of sanctity occasionally, and put on a show of piety as circumstances required. Poor things, they have pitied them: they do not seem to have brains enough to fill a walnut, and crawling upon their belly upon the earth and hissing at the moon would be their recreation. But, thank God, the cause of justice, and the children, won.

One of some of the evil-mongers and child-haters, who have been lurking about my path for years, reminds me of a tale of a poor old, semi-idiotic, ignorant gipsy, related by her to my wife a few weeks since, which has the effect that she, with other gipsy women, in looking for some old dried sticks in a gentleman's garden, in going to light a fire, discovered a young snake, which, by unaccountable means, found its way through a crevice, down her throat, and there it remains to this day.

It is alive, she said, and keeps growing, and the doctor tells her that there is not any medicine in their power that will kill it; and under its influence she is now neither well nor happy, trying to sow discord, breed mischief, and do all the harm an evil disposition can do.

So she goes.

It is an ignorant gipsy's tale, but pointing to a moral, and a lesson to be learnt out of it. My detractors would do well to study it.*

I have received letters lately from some of these who took issue with me against me, stating that I was right in reality, and they were wrong; in fact, this is and has been the universal light must be shed upon the inner and immoral life of a tent and a showman's van some day. The cries of the poor that are taking place within these places must go Heaven-ward, their cries are heard, and the wretched abodes are registered, and the poor children receiving education under the influence of the School Board Officer. More of this. This and similar stories are buried the seeds of future action.

Note.

[I owe thanks to HERBERT JOHNSON, Esq., London, and to the proprietors of the *Graphic* for the blocks they have kindly placed at my disposal, and which, with the exception of the frontispiece, were used by them after the appearance of my first edition, for our life-like illustrations of child-labour in the Brick-yards: and in addition to what is contained in our own statements, I beg to direct special attention to a valuable extract from ELIHU BURRITT'S *Walks in the Black Country and its Green Border-Land*, 1869. See pp. 16—21.]

The Egyptians made the Children of Israel to serve with rigour: and they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve was with rigour.—EXODUS i. 13, 14.

And it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out unto his brethren, and LOOKED ON THEIR BURDENS.—EXODUS ii. 11.

And it came to pass in process of time, that the King of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God, by reason of the bondage: and God heard their groanings, and God remembered His covenant.—EXODUS ii., 23, 24.

And Pharaoh said, Behold, the people of the land are now many, and ye make them rest from their burdens. And Pharaoh commanded the same day the taskmasters of the people, and their officers, saying, Ye shall no more give the people straw to make bricks, as heretofore: let them go and gather straw for themselves. And the tale of the bricks, which they did make heretofore, ye shall lay upon them; ye shall not diminish ought thereof: for they be idle: therefore they cry, saying, Let us go and sacrifice to our God. Let there more work be laid upon the men, that they may labour therein; and let them not regard vain words.—EXODUS v., 5-9.

INTRODUCTION.

MY desire in issuing this edition, is, first—to add another faggot and throbbing impulse to the zeal burning in the hearts of those of my countrymen who are seeking the education and protection of the “little ones.” Second, to call attention to the slip-shod manner in which the factory inspectors are doing their work in relation to the Brick-yards Acts in various parts of the country. Third, to enlist the sympathy of those who have hitherto turned a deaf ear to the “Cries of the children.”

To the press, as in the case of the canal movement, I owe much, for the invaluable help rendered in my crusade against the enormities of our brick-fields.

The kindly personal interest taken by the Queen in my feeble efforts to improve the condition of the women and children working at the brick and tile-yards, and also on canal boats, as shown in the many letters I have had the honour to receive from Her Majesty during the last ten years, has stimulated me forward when I was almost ready to grow faint and weary.

With the sanction of Heaven, and under the direction of Providence above, I venture to push this little rough and unpolished vessel from the shore, to meet with the reception the cause merits as it touches the many points of interest on its voyage.

G. S.

Coalville, Leicester, July 15, 1879.

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE H. A. BRUCE, M.P.,

Secretary of State for the Home Department, &c., &c., &c.

SIR,

I take the liberty to inscribe with your name the present volume, wherein will be found agreeably to my title-page, a STATEMENT of Facts on the employment of child-labour in Brick-yards, with cognate matters, an APPEAL to yourself and like-minded and like-hearted, to take an interest in the wronged "little ones," and a definite presentation of the REMEDY sought. I have a conviction that it only requires the *data* of this book to be really known by you and the nation, to secure redress of the manifold wrongs being daily perpetrated, and protection of those who so largely go to the making of "the people." Damaged physically, morally, and every way, at the most impressionable age, these young lives in their mis-growth deteriorate the national life; but conversely, shield them by the Law in the beginning, and inevitably blessed will be the reward. I honour you, sir, for your present and prospective valiant and manly grappling with the wide licensing question, and I trust that amid your weighty cares you will find a little leisure to give to the "Cry of the Children," interpreted by one who has cried their cry, and personally endured their bondage.

I am, Sir,

Yours very respectfully,

GEORGE SMITH.

Coalville, Leicester,

February, 1871.

[Since the publication of my first edition Mr. Bruce has been made a peer of the realm under the title of Lord Aberdare.]

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CHILDREN AT THE "PUG-MILL."

THE CRY OF THE CHILDREN
FROM
THE BRICK-YARDS OF ENGLAND,
AND HOW THE CRY HAS BEEN HEARD.

Part I.

A Cry from the Brick-yards.

ONE'S eyes inevitably gather a mist of tears over that old old story of the BRICK-TOILERS in Egypt, in the dear old Book—pathetic bits of which you have prefixed. I have no fault to find with preachers at this late day—be they in Church or Chapel—fetching thence texts for “doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness.” The “hard bondage” of these far-back brickmakers and their deliverance by Him who “hears” and “remembers,” are imperishably worked into the mightier story of a mightier redemption : and hence through all succeeding ages men shall turn and return to the divinely simple record. But after all it is an old story, and all the sufferers in it long, long at rest. So that at times I yearn for less preaching about the dead past, and more sympathetic practice in the living present : aye, within the very range of the old-world tragedy of these brickmakers ; for there are in this our own England brick-toilers and “hard bondage” in brick-making, that are sending upward “sighs” and “groanings” and “cries” of the most tragically sorrowful

sort—"sighs" and "groanings" and "cries" from the midst of ourselves in this so vaunted nineteenth century, that might well bring down our preachers—and others too—from their pulpit-dignities and proprieties, and impel them forth—like unto Moses—to "look" on the "burdens" and catch up the cry of the presently wronged and helpless. May my poor words take a grip of some few hearts and consciences!

It is told of a sailor returned from a far voyage, after many chequered years, that, landing in one of our great sea-ports and chancing to find himself in a back lane, he there saw a cage of birds suspended at a shop door, and that going up to it and opening the cage door, he took out one, and another, and another of the captive birds, and softly tossed them up into the free air, following their flight with beaming face: and that then he stood, purse in hand, ready to pay down the price of all. The money having been paid, and the sailor being wonderingly questioned on his singular conduct, he with wet eyes recounted his own experiences, ending with these words: "I have myself been a prisoner and know what it is to pine for liberty, and I wouldn't have the poor birds kept there."

Similarly in this thing of the brick-toilers and their hard bondage, and

The Cry of the Children

that I want to make articulate and penetrative, to the many loving hearts of my fellow countrymen and countrywomen, I write not at all as from the outside or as a mere spectator. As a child and lad I have myself gone through what thousands on thousands of boys and girls are to-day going through—have myself borne, and been borne down by, the "burdens" that young backs are bearing—have myself breathed the polluting moral (that is immoral) atmosphere they are breathing—carry myself scars that must go with me to my grave, through hurt and wrong, and which hurt

and wrong they are still enduring. Accordingly, the basis of my statements, as the impulse to my appeal, rests on an actual personal experience of the ongoings in England's brick-fields and brick-yards; while since I became a man, I have been and still am in constant relationship with the trade. My heart is sore for the "little ones," and stirred with indignation against the unwomanly and unwomanizing work assigned these mothers and sisters, and I must speak out. All honour unto reverence, to Mrs. Barrett Browning for her passionate as compassionate lay of the "Cry of the Children": scalding tears have baptized it with holier unction than apostolical hands; but my humble utterances must be in hard prose with scarcely a gleam of poetry illumining. I make no pretence to author-craft or fine sentence-writing. I aim at telling simply a dark chapter in the "annals of the poor." Throughout I speak that I do know.

The matter-of-fact that I should wish to bulk out in all its largeness and shame before the philanthropy and Christianity of England is, THAT IN OUR BRICK-FIELDS AND BRICKWORKS THERE ARE FROM TWENTY TO THIRTY THOUSAND CHILDREN—FROM AS LOW AS 3 AND 4 UP TO 16 AND 17—UNDERGOING A VERY "BONDAGE" OF TOIL AND A HORROR OF EVIL TRAINING THAT CARRIES PERIL IN IT. Then

I CLAIM THE PROTECTION OF THE LAW FOR THESE CHILDREN SPECIALLY, AND ALL CHILDREN UNIVERSALLY, BY PLACING THEM WITHIN THE INSPECTION AND REGULATION OF AN ACT KINDRED WITH THE WORKSHOPS OR THE FACTORY ACTS.

These are the two main things that I seek to make good to every candid reader and inquirer, and as against those employers and enforcers of CHILD-LABOUR, who mistakingly regard it as their interest to maintain the present system (or no system). So far as I know my own heart, I am anxious to exclude personalities, to avoid giving pain to

individuals : but it isn't easy, perhaps it is impossible, to expose wrongs without hitting the wrong-doers, to place before the community actual facts, and not lay one'sself open to accusations of personal *animus*, and all the rest of it. Throughout, my endeavour shall be so to put the case of my little clients (if I may be allowed the honour to call them so) as to prove a WRONG and secure a REMEDY—shrinking from no obloquy or misconstruction, because of telling “the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.” Locally, I have from time to time, through a goodly number of years, met the objections of certain employers and their mouth-pieces : even when the delirious violence of their language placed them beyond the pale of recognition within civilised society. But as it is only to involve one in unavailing argument with ignorance and imagined self-interest combined, to try to convince certain masters of brick-yards and their lackeys, I shall prefer putting my data with all integrity and carefulness before the public, and leave them to make their own way, *i.e.*, disentangled from merely personal charge and countercharge. I the more readily carry out this design from the abounding proofs received, that many employers are really unaware (culpably unaware) of the ongoing in their own brick-yards.

I have then to show first,

THAT IN OUR BRICK-FIELDS AND BRICK-YARDS, THERE ARE FROM TWENTY TO THIRTY THOUSAND CHILDREN—FROM AS LOW AS 3 AND 4 UP TO 16 AND 17—UNDERGOING A “BONDAGE” OF TOIL AND A HORROR OF EVIL-TRAINING THAT CARRIES PERIL IN IT.

I begin my STATEMENT by re-printing here unaltered, a short paper read by myself at the Social Science Congress, that met at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, September, 1870. For reasons that will emerge in the sequel, I re-produce my paper exactly as read and subsequently printed and widely circulated.

“THE
EMPLOYMENT OF CHILDREN
IN
BRICK AND TILE MAKING,
CONSIDERED
IN RELATION TO THE FACTORY AND WORKSHOPS ACTS.

BY GEORGE SMITH, OF COALVILLE.

*(A Paper read at the Social Science Congress, Newcastle-upon-Tyne,
September, 1870.)*

“Few persons unacquainted with the character of the brick manufacture, and the condition of those employed therein, especially children and young persons, can form any adequate idea of the extent to which, so far as this particular branch of industry is concerned, the social and educational legislation of recent years has been ignored, to the great suffering of many, and the detriment of all.

“The condition of the children employed in brick and tile making is most deplorable. I am alluding to the brick manufacture as carried on in the Midland and other counties, where I have had personal experience of the grave evils to which it is my desire that public attention should be practically directed.

“When a child of about seven years of age, I was employed by a relative to assist him in making bricks. It is not my wish to say anything against him ; but like most of his class at that time, and like many even now, he thought kicks and blows formed the best means of obtaining the maximum of work from a lad. And as if these were not enough, excessively long hours of labour were added.

"At nine years of age, my employment consisted in continually carrying about forty pounds of clay upon my head, from the clay heap to the table on which the bricks were made. When there was no clay, I had to carry the same weight of bricks. This labour had to be performed, almost without intermission, for thirteen hours daily. Sometimes my labours were increased by my having to work all night at the kilns.

"The result of the prolonged and severe labour to which I was subjected, combined with the cruel treatment experienced by me at the hands of the adult labourers, are shown in marks which are borne by me to this day. On one occasion I had to perform a very heavy amount of labour. After my customary day's work, I had to carry 1,200 nine-inch bricks from the maker to the floors on which they are placed to harden. The total distance thus walked by me that night was not less than fourteen miles, seven miles of which I traversed with eleven pounds' weight of clay in my arms, besides lifting the unmade clay and carrying it some distance to the maker. The total quantity of clay thus carried by me was five and a half tons. For all this labour I received sixpence! The fatigue thus occasioned brought on a serious illness, which for several weeks prevented my resuming work.

"My reason for giving these personal experiences is that they are similar to those which are being endured by large numbers of children and young persons at the present day, notwithstanding the existence of the Factory and Workshops Acts.

"The manner in which I contrived to obtain some education was as follows. For several years I had, in addition to my daily labour, to be up all night at the brick kilns during two nights in each week. For this extra work I received one shilling per week, which shilling was my own. Of this money I paid sixpence for attending a night-school in the evening, when not required at the kilns; the other sixpence went for the purchase of books. But it is not every child who possesses the desire or determination to do thus, yet, without so doing, there is literally no means of instruction open to the children. They must grow up in utter ignorance, and with what results I need not mention.

"A Sub-Inspector of Factories informed me the other day

that he had visited several brick-yards in the Midlands, and found the children to be in precisely the condition described by me. The children were of various ages, from nine to twelve, but mostly nine to ten. They were of both sexes, and in a half-naked state. Their employment consisted in carrying the damp clay on their heads to the brick-makers, and carrying the made bricks to the "floors" on which they are placed to dry. Their employment lasts thirteen hours daily, during which they traverse a distance of about twenty miles. It may be asked why the Inspector did not interfere? He could not, the Act not applying to establishments in which less than fifty persons are employed.

"Any person visiting these brick-yards will soon discover the need for something being done for the poor little ones. Imagine a child of nine or ten, with features prematurely old, toiling from six in the morning until seven in the evening, and receiving nothing but curses and blows from the men, because he is not quick enough in his movements. What is it but actual slavery of the worst description? No wonder many of those children find life a burden to them.

"As a further proof of the severe and extremely heavy nature of the toil undergone by the children, I would submit to your inspection a lump of solid clay, weighing forty-three pounds. This, in a wet state, was taken a few days ago from off the head of a child nine years of age, who had daily to walk a distance of twelve and a half miles, half that distance being traversed while carrying this heavy burden. The distance and weights are arrived at in this way: The workman makes, on an average, 3,000 bricks per day, the whole weighing about twelve tons; the whole of which has to be carried by two children only, the distance from the clay heap to the brickmaker's table being thirty-five yards. This shows that each child has to travel six miles and a quarter with forty-three pounds of clay on his head, and six miles and a quarter back to the clay heap. The clay was taken from the child, and the calculation made by me, in the presence of both master and men.

"Of course, the natural results ensue. Ignorance and immorality prevail to a fearful extent among the workmen and children so employed. How could it be otherwise? All goodness and purity seems to become stamped out of these

people, and were I to relate what could be related, the whole country would become sickened and horrified.

"The workers cannot perceive the pernicious character of the present system. Use has made it become second nature. Were it not for this, many parents might hesitate to doom their children to an occupation entailing premature loss of strength; a life of ignorance, vice, and imprudence; and an old age passed in the workhouse. The accuracy of this latter assertion is confirmed by the fact that 80 per cent. of the men applying for relief, in 1869, to the Uxbridge Union, were brickmakers.

"The employment of girls under the age of 18 in brick-yards ought to be rendered illegal. The present system is a prolific source of immorality and vicious habits of the worst kind, even more so than the agricultural gang-system once prevalent in some of the Midland Counties. Out of the many hundreds of brick-yard girls, whose career I have personally marked, not more than a dozen have become decent and respectable wives.

"If we wish to remedy the evils to which I have, very slightly I fear, alluded, a change must be made in the present system of Government inspection. At present, brick-yards employing less than fifty hands, are exempt from Government supervision. The absurdity of such an arrangement is obvious. In my own neighbourhood there are several brick-yards, one of which, having more than fifty hands, is under Government inspection; the others are not. In the larger yard, a lad of about 12 years of age was prohibited working by the inspecting surgeon: the very next day that lad was found employed in one of the smaller brick-yards, and working eighty-four hours in each week. Now, this is the kind of thing which we ought to prevent.

"But a practical solution of the difficulty is to be found. All establishments, no matter how many or how few hands are employed, should be placed under the Factory or Workshops Acts. The former act should be made to apply to all light trades, in which the half-time system can be adopted; the Workshops Act being applied to those trades in which heavy manual labour is required, and in which the half-time system cannot easily be introduced. Under the present arrangement, it is difficult to tell under which Act an industrial establishment is to be placed.

"Under the Workshops Act, no child should be allowed to work under, say, twelve years of age. The hours of labour for such children would have to be regulated according to the nature of the employment. In brick-yards, no child should be permitted under the age of twelve, and not even then, unless he produced a certificate showing he had attended school for three years, say, between seven and twelve years of age. For the first two years the children should not work more than eight hours per day; between the ages of fourteen and eighteen, ten hours per day should be the maximum. This would afford the children and young persons an opportunity of attending the night-schools. Further, I would prohibit the employment of any youth under eighteen years of age, from driving an engine, who has not had the full charge of one for at least twelve months preceding.

"The Workshops Act should be carried out partly by the local authorities, and partly by the Government. The appointment of Local Inspectors should be placed in the hands of Boards of Guardians, subject to the approval of the Government. There should be one or more Inspectors in every parish; these Inspectors to be under the supervision of Sub-Inspectors of districts, who, in their turn, would be under the superintendence of Local Inspectors. The Sub-Inspectors would be empowered to prosecute upon the information of the Local Inspectors or Overseers. By this means, an efficient supervision of our brick-yards, collieries, and iron-works, and similar places in which child labour is largely employed, might be attained, and most, if not all, of the evils to which I have referred become mitigated or removed."*

*It may be here remarked that I exhibited, during the reading of my paper, in an old fish-basket, among the silks, satins, and broad cloth surrounding the platform, and causing no little consternation among the august assembly, a lump of wet clay, weighing nearly fifty pounds, which I had taken off a girl's head two days before. [*See illustration opposite page 1.*] The child was only about nine years of age, and travelled backwards and forwards to and from the clay-heap to the moulder the distance as described in my paper. When the poor girl was set to do this kind of slavery her cheeks were rosy and plump, spirits buoyant, and limbs active, but they were not long in becoming paler and gradually less, her ardour quenched, and gait languid, similar to the poor girl with four bricks, weighing 44 pounds, in her arms, as seen in the background.

Since the reading of this paper, and the passing of the Brick-yard Act in 1871, a more wonderful change for the better, thank God, has come over the character, habits, and customs of the brick-yard *employés* and employers all over the country. In one large brick-yard, before the passing of the Act, scarcely any one of the children could be found who could read or write. After the passing of the Act, there was not one out of 45 but what could read or write, and no girls or women employed ; and, at other places where women are employed, some of them have become Sunday-school teachers.

I received abundant evidence at the Congress that my paper produced a deep impression, and excited no common interest in those who heard it. The old saying was on many lips, "One half the world doesn't know how the other half lives." From the newspaper press, local and metropolitan, the subject received full and sympathetic consideration. Personally, letters came from far and near, from gentle and simple, from employers and employed, multiplying my data and enforcing my suggestions. The letters of the actual workers were in very many cases touched with a pathos that went to my heart, communicating, as they did, youthful and adult experiences of bitter suffering, and neglect, and wrong.

With one solitary exception, my paper was received and discussed worthily, and in language fitted to be used by self-respecting writers even when they differ. One mistaken manufacturer, and his men, almost constituted the exception. Because I went back to my own early employment at some Brick and Tile Works, and because I made my simple statement as to the abounding immorality of girl-life as affecting personal and family-life—a statement broad and general and taking in all my experience and observation—this manufacturer chose to apply every "jot and tittle" to his works and to his works exclusively, as if there were no other brick or tile-works in the district but his own, and allowed himself such

license of vituperation (culminating in a blustering announcement of legal proceedings, that served only to make him supremely ridiculous). This manufacturer never could allow the "respectability" of *his* works to be impugned, never! and so the choler rose and rose, and the humble writer was to be crushed beneath the avalanche of the would-be big man's wrath. It wasn't an avalanche: nothing but mere squash, and overwhelming only its furious and contemptible outpourer with the laughter of the entire community, while "that fellow Smith," somehow (after the true Englishman's fashion), did not regard himself as "beaten," or in any way called upon to stand cap in hand or apologetically before this magnate.

If one seeking to pass as a "gentleman" so forgot what was due to himself (as well as others)—what might be looked for from those under him? Precisely what resulted, viz., the extreme of coarse abuse and imputation of base motives, &c., &c., &c.—all of which I met at once without the gage having been taken up by an appeal *to my life as lived out openly before the world unto my present position*. For with every abatement and consciousness of my full share of human imperfection, I can challenge a comparison of my entire life with that of any one among them, owning it gratefully as of the "grace of God I am what I am," and say from the depths of my innermost soul:—"Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

Having sufficiently noticed the one exceptional reception given to my little paper by this manufacturer and his men in the county newspapers,* I do not deem it necessary to re-slay the slain. I would simply re-affirm deliberately and as under oath, that to this day the Staffordshire, Derbyshire, and Leicestershire brick-yards furnish *typical examples and confirmations* of every evil with which I have charged the system as regards child labour, and that will be adduced in this book. The semi-supercilious, semi-heartless ignorance of

* See Letters in Part II. "Storming the Citadel."

the actual ongoings in the brick-yards and among their work-people by masters ; their unconcern as to any interests beyond paying so much wage for so much work (done by whom or how, it matters not); their neglect of anything like provision for educational benefit, or other improvement or inducements to improvement of the rising generation ; and the over-exaction of child-labour and child ill-usage, and child-corruption, and tragically-common immoralities, impurities and cognate evil issues, are established by facts within my personal knowledge or attested, while I have not found these yards any different from their neighbours. When evidence comes to be taken, as it must be, for basis of legislation, Mr. Manufacturer and his "respectable" men ("all honourable men"!) may rest assured it will not be my fault if the interior life of the Blue brick and tile yards have not daylight let in upon them. Meanwhile, no simulated indignation (mere injured vanity of "respectability"), no mendacity of misrepresentation, no calumniation of myself, no "great man" airs, will change the matter-of-fact that the evils of brick-yards work out the same dolorous issues similarly everywhere. More anon of this.* But leaving for the present the Blue brickmakers, wearers of a cap that never was intended for their sole use, I would now strengthen the entire substance of my paper

* While I have said hard and unpolished things about the Tunstall and other brickmakers, I would wish to say also, that the very name of Tunstall, its Sunday-schools, Sunday-school teachers, scholars, and associates, ministers, and night-schools, I hold and shall for ever hold in loving memory and grateful remembrance for the heaven-born blessings I was the recipient of while spending the first twenty-three years of my seedling life within its garden, the influence of which I feel daily in my work, while seeking the education and protection of the children employed in brick-yards, and those living and working on canal boats ; in fact, a quarter of a century's absence—except an occasional visit—has seemed to turn some of the old spots almost into "holy ground." The revered names of Nixon, Spilsbury, Lees, Wedgwood, Edge, Bridgwood, Johnson, Walker, Lunt, Lawton, Emberton, Blackhurst, Binnall, Eardly, and a host of others will never be forgotten by me.

from an unchallenged and necessarily impartial authority, viz., ELIHU BURRITT in his "Walks in the Black Country and its Green Border Land" (Low), 1869—a more venerable name not being known in the two hemispheres. Here is then

AN AMERICAN'S ACCOUNT AND IMPRESSIONS OF AN ENGLISH BRICK-YARD.

"Meeting an extensive brickmaker, we stopped to see his establishment near the Old Hill Station, but a little way from Halesowen. Here he was carrying on a large business in the manufacture of blue-black bricks of every size and pattern for coping of walls, stable-floors, and other uses. He had expended £7,000 in buildings and machinery, and was turning out about 100,000 bricks a week. Here was another specimen of the riches and resources which Nature has stored away in the cellars of the Black Country. The space from which he had taken the clay for 100,000 bricks a week for several years would not measure over half an acre, embracing the whole compass of the pit's mouth. The crater is already sixty feet deep, and the clay, he thinks, will hold good for twice that depth. It is what we call in America "dyed in the wool," and not in the burning. The establishment embraces the latest improvements in brick-making, and all the mechanical forces are utilised to their utmost capacity. The steam-engine, for instance, draws up on an inclined tramway from the bottom of the pit a huge coal-scuttle full of the clay, enough to make 500 bricks, and tips it over at the top of the line into a hopper, whence it goes down through successive kneading-troughs, and is at last forced out of an iron cylinder by a piston, all ready to be made into loaves for the oven. While the engine is doing all this multifarious work with one hand for the clay ovens, it is doing a similar work with the other for those of the common household. Behind a thin partition it is grinding grists of wheat and other grain for the farmers around and for the proprietor of the works, who purchases enough to keep the mill running when local wants cannot do it. The partition wall is dust-

tight, so that there is no possible transfusion of the clay on one side into the flour on the other ; and '*Honi soit qui mal y pense*' may be truly said of him who suspects a gritty association of the two elements incompatible with well-leavened bread. The ovens or kilns are of prodigious capacity, and the heat necessary to produce bricks almost as hard as cast-iron, is equal to that of the furnaces in which that metal is fused from the ore. One of these is a smaller oven, in which a little batch of two or three thousand of any pattern may be baked at the shortest notice to supply a special order. The long kneading-sheds and the operations within them attracted our particular and almost painful attention. The domestic simile I have carried through this notice was justified by what we saw here. What woman is to dough in a private household, she is to clay in these sheds. Whether the wives and daughters of Israel under the Pharaohs were also consigned to this unwomanly work in the brick-yards of Egypt, is a question which the Scriptures do not enable us to decide. If they were not sentenced to the same toil as their husbands and brothers, then the brickmakers of the Black Country have improved upon the industrial ethics and economy of the Egyptians, and availed themselves of the cheapness and necessities of female labour, in producing the building material of the country. A writer, who visited the different brick-making establishments of the district, estimates that seventy-five per cent. of the persons employed are females ; and perhaps two-thirds of these are young girls from nine to twelve years of age. We saw one set of these hands at work at the moulding bench, and watched with special interest the several parts they performed. A middle-aged woman, as we took her to be from some dress indications of her sex, was standing at the bench, butter-stick in hand. Apparently she had on only a single garment reaching to her feet. But this appearance may have come from her clothes being so bespattered and weighted with wet clay that they adhered so closely to her person that it was as fully developed through them as the female form of some marble statues through the thin drapery in which they are clad by the sculptor. She wore a turban on her head of the same colour ; for only one colour or consistency was possible at her work. The only thing feminine in her appearance was

a pair of ear-drops she wore as a token of her sex and of its tastes under any circumstances. With two or three moulds she formed the clay dough into loaves with wonderful tact and celerity. With a dash, splash and a blow one was perfectly shaped. One little girl then took it away and laid it down upon the drying-floor with the greatest precision to keep the rows in perfect line. Another girl, a little older, brought the clay to the bench. This was a heavier task, and we watched her appearance and movements very closely. She was a girl apparently about thirteen. Washed and well clad, and with a little sportive life in her, she would have been almost pretty in face and form. But though there was some colour in her cheeks, it was the flitting flush of exhaustion. She moved in a kind of swaying, sliding way, as if muscle and joint did not fit and act together naturally. She first took up a mass of the cold clay, weighing about twenty-five pounds, upon her head, and while balancing it there, she squatted to the heap without bending her body, and took up a mass of equal weight with both hands against her stomach, and with the two burdens walked about a rod and deposited them on the moulding bench. No wonder, we thought, that the colour in her cheeks was an unhealthy flush. With a mass of cold clay held against her stomach, and bending under another on her head, for ten or twelve hours in a day, it seemed a marvel that there could be any red blood in her veins at all. How such a child could ever grow an inch in any direction after being put to this occupation, was another mystery. Certainly not an inch could be added to her stature in all the working days of her life. She could only grow at night and on Sundays.

"Each moulding woman has two, sometimes three, of these girls to serve her, one to bring the clay, the other to carry away the bricks when formed. What may be just but equally unfortunate, they are generally her own children if she has any of suitable size and strength; but, for lack of such, she employs the children of equally unfortunate mothers. Whether in cruel or good-natured satire, they are called *pages*, as if waiting upon a queen. And she, perhaps, is the most directly aimed at in this witticism. Some irreverent wag, looking at her standing by her four-legged throne, with her broad wooden sceptre in her hand, and her yellow turban

on her head, might call her the Sultana of Edom, or the queen of red clay, and not travel far from the line of resemblance. Still, there is something painful and cruel in this mock crowning of innocent misfortune. It savours a little of the taunting irony of those ignorant Roman soldiers, who platted a crown of thorns for the sublimest brow that ever bore the stamp of humanity or beamed on its weakness.

"A woman with her two or three pages will mould 3,000 bricks in a day by extra exertion; she is paid 2s. 8d. per 1,000. Out of this she pays about 2s. per day to the girls that serve her; so she can really earn large wages at this man's work, when well hardened to it, with requisite skill. Indeed she has the easiest task of the three, at the moulding bench. For there is really but little heavy lifting or tiresome bending for her to do. She stands upright, and has only to handle a small lump of clay at a time; while the girl that supplies her moulds has to bring on her head and in her arms 30,000 lbs. of clay daily, in loads averaging fifty pounds each, for the brick when formed weighs eleven pounds.

"The proprietor of the establishment was exceedingly courteous to us, and showed us every department and operation, and answered any question with the greatest good-will, and we have no doubt he is as thoughtful towards his hands as the other brick manufacturers in the district. So we felt a little embarrassed by his very civilities in intimating a wish to know the *morale* of his *employés*. Indeed, he seemed to be taken a little aback when we asked what proportion of them could read. He evidently had never stopped to ask that question of himself, and could not answer it for us. When Capper suggested that the new Factory Act would probably bring the subject of the education of the children he employed before him in a new light, he replied with much apparent satisfaction that the Act would not affect him, as it applied to ornamental brick-making, and that he had discontinued that branch of the business. As we were leaving the last moulding shed we visited, a little boy came up to the bench, who was but a little taller than one of its legs. I asked him his age, and was surprised when he said he was seventeen. I almost mechanically put my umbrella up against him, and found he exceeded its length by full nine inches; so that he must have been quite three feet and a half on his bare feet, although he at first looked

shorter. He probably had found no other time to grow except when a-bed at night or on the Sunday. This enterprising manufacturer makes the hardest and best bricks to be found in the market. The canal passes close to his kilns on one side and the railway on the other ; so that he has ready and cheap means of transporting them in any direction or to any distance in the country. His establishment represents the most improved system that has yet been adopted, and he works it energetically and successfully. So, having seen it thoroughly, I had reason to regard it as the best average example of the brick-trade in the Black Country.

"I have already cited a statement from a good authority as to the per centage of female labour employed. The same writer says : 'The average hours of labour are from six a.m. to six p.m., and the girls are seldom required to work overtime, but the men who fire the kilns are engaged all night.'

"In all the brick-fields the girls are required to turn on Sunday morning the bricks made on the previous day. The wages paid to the young girls vary from 8d. to 10d. per day, according to the amount of work they are able to perform, for the piece-work system generally prevails in the brick-yards. In the red and blue brick-works the girls are harder worked and worse paid than in the white brick-yards, which are not nearly so numerous. In the latter the clay, instead of being ground in a mill, has to be trampled by the women with their hands and naked feet. It is estimated that upwards of 1,200 females are employed at the various brick-fields of the district."

It needs no italics or large commentary to emphasise the preceding striking narrative. The character of the venerable Mr. Burritt is warrant that there is no over-statement : and thus the facts of my book are verified by this famous American.

But bad as were the sights Mr. Burritt describes, his wonder, not to say horror, would have been intensified, had he examined into the child-labour of the dust-sifters, punchers out of the holes, treaders of clay with bare feet in the winter-time, "boat-loaders" and "shearers" out of

the clay. Right under Mr. Manufacturer's eyes, *i.e.*, all over Staffordshire, there are hundreds of young people engaged in these unfeminine and most pestiferous occupations. Then there are the young women in a half-nude state, setting and drawing bricks to and from the kilns, and "punning in"—most unwomanly work. Even some of the very sheds, or hovels, as they are more properly called, in which many of the poor children work, seem to have been erected without regard to light, the few windows to be seen in the roof, or on the sides, are so covered with coaldust, iron dust, smoke and "splashes," as to almost prevent the cheering rays of the great sun forcing its light into these dark places of our land. In fact, the sheds seem to have been constructed on a principle intended to encourage every kind of vicious lust, and beastly brutality, so as to exert a withering influence upon the souls and bodies of the juvenile workers immediately they step within the doors. Light, if not lightning, must one day flash over these enormities, as well in their physical hardship as in their moral, immoral attendants. The whole question of youthful and female workers at blue-clay bricks demands thorough reform.

Next comes an equally impartial authority on this matter. I refer to the "Reports of the Inspectors of Factories to Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Home Department, for the half-year ending 31st October, 1864. Presented to both Houses of Parliament by command of Her Majesty." London: (Spottiswoode, 1865, 8vo.) That I may not needlessly expose myself to a charge of garbling, or of so selecting suitable extracts as to make out my case without giving equal weight to other portions, I submit the entire Report bearing on our subject, as presented by ROBERT BAKER, Esq., one of the "Inspectors of Factories." I shall have a good deal to say on its details, as well as on those of my own paper afterwards. The Report fills pp. 120—125 of the Blue Book, as above, and comes in under

“DRAIN AND SEWAGE PIPES.

“I have referred to drain and sewage pipes, as having been withdrawn from the provisions of the Factories' Extension Act. Up to a certain period of last year, supposing all such works to have been included, I had placed them under the law, and the opportunities thus afforded me, whilst inspecting works where these pipes were being made concurrently with bricks, of observing the condition of workers in brick-yards in various parts of the kingdom, lead me to express my regret that they are not all included under the same regulations as other works where women and children are employed. I consider the employment of children in brick-yards absolutely cruel, and that the degradation of the female character in them is most complete.

“The employment of females as brick-moulders in the south and west of England, is not nearly so extensive as in those Midland districts where iron-works prevail, and where, in consequence, there is a perpetual demand for adolescent and adult male labour, so that very few males are to be found in the brick-yards, particularly in the fire-brick-yards in South Staffordshire, for example. Hence, children of very early years are sent to the clay-yards, and are brought up amid scenes and conversations which are most demoralising. One may, in fact, scarcely recognise, either in the person or the mind and manner of the female clay-worker, a feature of the sex to which she belongs. I have seen a boy of 5 years old, working among two or three-and twenty females, being ‘broken in,’ as they call it to the labour. In one case, a boy of 11 years of age was carrying 14 pounds weight of clay upon his head, and as much more within his arms, backward and forward, from the temperer to the brickmaker, walking eight miles a day upon the average of six days; and in another, a boy of 16 was carrying green bricks to the floor in the mould, weighing 14 pounds there, and 3 pounds the empty mould back, and walking 18 miles a day upon the average. I have also seen females, of all ages, nineteen or twenty together (some of them mothers of families), undistinguishable from men, excepting by the occasional peeping out of an earring, sparsely clad, up to the bare knees in clay splashes, and evidently without a vestige of womanly delicacy, thus employed, until

it makes one feel for the honour of the country that there should be such a condition of human labour existing in it. I questioned one such group in a brick-yard in South Staffordshire as to how many of them could read, and found that only one in twenty was so qualified; and out of the whole number, she only had been to a place of worship on the Sunday previously, the whole of them being partially employed on Sundays as well as week-days in 'battening,' 'turning bricks,' or 'earthing the kilns.'

"But lest my evidence should seem partial, or as only seen through the medium of inspectorship, permit a master brick-maker to give his own version of the story.

'I am a brick and tile manufacturer and sanitary pipe-maker, in the neighbourhood of Tipton, midway between Birmingham and Wolverhampton, in a direct line from each. I employ about 50 workpeople, one half of whom are women and children. On principle, I am, however, opposed to the employment of women and children in clay works, and have made many efforts to dispense with their labour, but have always found insuperable obstacles in that direction. Our system of working is much the same as in all similar clay works, in the South Staffordshire mining district; but the great demand for youths from 14 to 18 years of age, in their on-works and collieries, compels the clay manufacturer to resort to the employment of girls, women, and the younger lads. Hence girls of 9 or 10 years of age, and boys of 9 find work with us readily. These are mostly engaged in carrying clay to the moulding benches, carrying bricks and tiles off to the drying sheds, and again from the sheds to the kilns or ovens, besides numerous other odd jobs, such as clearing away the scoria and ashes from the kilns, ovens, drying sheds, and engine, oiling the press dies and moulds, &c., carrying bricks, tiles, and pipes to and from the presses and stamps, sweeping and clearing out the rubbish from the sheds, kilns, and clay-stove rooms, and taking the clay to the pug-mills, and carrying it away again to the store rooms or moulders, as it may be required. Those who carry away the bricks from the moulders are mostly girls from 9 to 12 years old. On an average, they carry 10 lbs. of clay, and a mould weighing 4 lbs. (14 lbs. at each journey) say 2,000 times a day, 7 yards each journey; carrying the mould back the 7 yards also 2,000 times; so that they each remove in one day of ten hours' work 28,000 lbs. or 12½ tons, 7 yards, and 8,000 lbs. 7 yards; total 36,000 lbs., or over 16 tons in the day. Moreover the bricks when 'reared,' 'gormed,' or 'piled,' and when 'hacked' or 'walled up,' all require moving three times over, and in one instance are carried quite 7 yards. But this work is shared in by all that work for that particular moulding table. The moulder, who is usually a woman from 20 to 30 years old, and the two clay

carriers, who generally are from 10 to 16 years old, assist; so that the portion of work performed by the carrier away may be taken as one remove or one-fourth of the same 28,000 lbs. weight, for seven yards distance, which added to the 16 tons before-mentioned, makes up a total of 28½ tons carried each day by a child of 9 to 12 years of age.

Those who carry clay to the moulders, called clay carriers, remove on an average, 20 to 40 lbs. of clay on the head, and about 10 to 20 lbs. in their arms; say one of 10 years old, carrying in all full 30 lbs. of clay each journey of 40 yards, and traversing 250 journeys per day, removing 3½ tons a distance of 40 yards daily, walks 4½ miles in doing it and 4½ miles back; walks 3 miles in 'rearing,' 'gorming,' and 'hacking' the bricks, and on an average 2 miles going to and returning from work, giving a total distance traversed by the younger clay carriers of 14 miles; likewise, this clay carrier does the same amount of work in removing the bricks to the 'gorms' and 'hacks' as the carrier-off does, namely, 7,000 lbs. carried 7 yards, so that in all he carries more than 6½ tons of clay daily, fully 47 yards, and walks in all quite 14 miles per day.

The elder clay carriers are usually 14 or 16 years of age, and occasionally older, and on an average carry a load of clay on the head and in the arms of 60 lbs. weight, for an average distance of 50 yards, and the number of journeys per diem 300. This gives a daily total of 8 tons of soft black clay, carried 50 yards by this one girl, and a distance there and back of 17 miles. Add to this 3 miles traversed in 'gorming' and 'hacking' the bricks, and 2 miles in coming to work and going back home, and we arrive at the conclusion that the elder clay carriers, of from 14 to 16 years of age, walk 22 miles daily at their work.

But besides carrying the above amount of clay 50 yards, they also do a great part of the work of carrying the made bricks to the 'hacks' and 'gorms.' This part of their work would be equal to carrying 1 ton more clay the entire 50 yards; so it may be assumed as a fair average that they carry 9 tons of clay 50 yards and walk 22 miles to earn a day's wage, amounting to not exceeding 1s. 6d.

The moulder's work is not so heavy. She stands at the moulding table, throws the lump of clay into the mould, squeezes it in, then planes it off level with the open mould, with a lath-like piece of wood about a foot long, and in the course of the day lifts, moulds, squeezes and planes, and helps to 'tap,' 'gorm,' 'batt,' and 'hack' some 8 tons of clay each day. The children who carry clay to the tile and quarry, and front brick and best goods moulders, have comparatively light work; say, for girls 10 to 13 years old an average of 5 tons of clay carried 20 yards; and the carriers away of the tile, quarry, and front bricks, being of similar age, bear similar weights, say, to a distance of 10 yards.

In speaking of work, weights, distances, &c., as above-mentioned, I have only referred to my own particular manufactory, though what is true of these works is a fair average of all.

'The moral evils consequent on the employment of women and young girls in clay works, are very serious, very general, and most disastrous to their well-being, from whatever point of view it is looked upon.

'As a rule, not one in ten of the women and children has been taught to read and write, nor have above one half of this small proportion ever entered a school. In their poverty and need their parents have sent out these little tiny hands to carry clay and set down bricks all day long from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. all the week through; plodding with clay-loaded heads and arms, to and fro, over hot drying stones, bare-footed and ragged. The other girls and women have, for the most part, been recruited from these young toilers, labouring year after year at clay carrying or brick piling, till qualified by experience to take the more lucrative and generally coveted post of brick-moulders.

'In many cases I have found that the young children belong to widows, some of them of deceased miners: some having neither father nor mother, but finding a home with some of those kindly affectionate working people whose rough but tender acts of hospitality and sympathy are the best redeeming features of the working-classes. Improvidence, drunkenness, indolence, and last but not least of these terrible evils, trade strikes and lock-outs, each contributes its sad quota of recruits. I would not libel my fellow-countrymen, I would not exaggerate their errors and failings, but truth demands from me this sad statement, such parents are the first to send their little children out to work in brick-yards, when they ought to be learning something useful at school (I thank God that such parents are, however, the exception and not the rule), acquiring simple instruction for their minds, so that body and mind might grow together in happy unison, to a manly and womanly maturity. Yet these are in fact (so to speak), the rising generation of the most civilized country of the world. Ignorant, untaught, and unheeding of education, they pass through life, looking on the few "schollards" among them, with an almost heathen awe. The schoolmaster is to them what a conjurer is to savages, a mysterious superior being. Surely it is due to these poor little slaves that the enlightened genius of our Christian legislature should protect society from any further invasion of ignorance; limit their hours of labour reasonably, and give them the chance of acquiring an elementary schooling suited to their position in life.

'I have known parents in receipt of two, three, and four pounds a week, send their children out to work at clay works, for a few shillings per week, hung in rags, whilst the parents themselves rioted at home in luxuries and drink. On the other hand, I have seen, and I say it with pride, two or three little girls, working hard, anxious for overtime, always cheerful, always at their post, striving like the good angels they were, to win an honest crust for a poor kind sickly mother or grandmother.

'I leave to other pens the drawing out of the pictures here presented to that ultimate and unavoidable breadth, in the wider

growth of these evils in the coming years, when these children become the working men and women of the district.

‘But there are often phases of evil connected with work in brick-yards and clay-yards, generally, which I must not overlook, especially the demoralising results ever accruing from the mixed employment of the sexes. A flippancy and familiarity of manners with boys and men, grows daily on the young girls. Then, the want of respect and delicacy towards females exhibits itself in every act, word and look; for the lads grow so precocious, and the girls so coarse in their language and manners from close companionship at work, that in most cases the modesty of female life gradually becomes a byword instead of a reality, and they sing unblushingly before all, whilst at work, the lewdest and most disgusting songs, till oftentimes stopped short by the entrance of the master or foreman. The overtime work is still more objectionable, because boys and girls, men and women, are less under the watchful eye of the master, nor looked upon by the eye of day. All these things, the criminality, levity, coarse phrases, sinful oaths, lewd gestures, and conduct of the adults and youths, exercise a terrible influence for evil on the young children. Hence a generation full of evil phrases, manners, and thoughts is daily growing up in our midst without the knowledge of better things. It is quite common for girls employed in brick-yards to have illegitimate children. Of the thousands whom I have met with, or known as working, I should say that one in every four who had arrived at the age of twenty had an illegitimate child. Several had had three or four, and it is a deplorable fact that, as a rule, brick manufacturers do not trouble themselves to inquire into the moral character of either women or children when they employ them. I have found myself often looked upon as an oddity when I have asked, “Is she of good character?” and been subjected to sharp criticism when I have discharged a single woman because she was palpably *enciente*.’

“Such are the sentiments of a master brickmaker, who with a few others of his colleagues is anxious for the introduction of any measure which should limit the hours of labour in brick-yards, and afford to those employed in them the means of education. My own recent inspection of a good many such places convinces me of the obligation there lies upon all thinking persons to look the evils which are growing up from such congregational labour, fairly in the face, and to ask whether such labour can be carried on perfectly, freely, and quite as profitably both to the employers and the employed, with a reasonable limit to all, with the means of education afforded to the workers and with a discipline which, in time, would subordinate all these evil

propensities to order and regularity, is it wise to prolong the time before making the attempt, till those propensities have become permanently established, and until the state of society may demand sterner remedies to overcome them? I have visited, or have had visited, many brick-yards in the United Kingdom within the last five months, and the objections to legal restrictions have been so few by the employers, and in many cases have been so earnestly desired by the workers, that I am satisfied, with slight modifications, the Factory Extension Act could be applied as readily to them as to any other kind of works whatsoever.

"You will permit me, I am sure, to express my grateful acknowledgments to all the potters, both masters and workers, with whom I have come in contact during my personal introduction of the law to them. Nothing could have been more courteous nor more gratifying than the reception I have met with on every hand. Both sides have, I am sure, overlooked many faults of mine, and have foregone many temptations to rebel against a power which at first sight must have appeared very arbitrary and authoritative, compared with the habits and usages of unrestricted labour, from the kindest spirit towards its administrator, and from a feeling that the duty was one which opportunity had imposed upon me, and which it was needful I should perform. Shrewd, clever, ready, and thoroughly warm-hearted, it is impossible for the potters, as a body, both masters and men, to be otherwise than obedient to the law which has been formed for their benefit. And I look forward to the time with the deepest interest, if happily I may be permitted to see it, when, in the leisure which is now given to them by the restrictions imposed upon labour, education will have effected all those moral and social changes amongst the workers which it is certain to effect when diligently pursued; and when, by a wise thrift and economy of their means, more heads of families than those which we now see, may have become units in the political element of the country, by exchanging practices and vices of barbaric times for the enlightenment and intelligence of the age in which they live."

This seems to me a very remarkable State-paper: and I know not that I can better or more suggestively bring out

those things to which I am anxious to win general attention, than by noticing *seriatim* the leading points indicated and illustrated by the Inspector. Postponing for a little those items that bear on the inoperativeness or the evasion of the law in its application to brick-yards, I invite the most earnest heed of every reader of this book to these deplorable FACTS relative to child-labour, viz.—

- 1.—The extreme earliness of the “bondage.”
- 2.—General prematurity of the “bondage.”
- 3.—The disproportion of the work to the workers.
- 4.—The long hours.
- 5.—The hard usage.
- 6.—The immorality.

I would consider these successively.

It will be noticed that the vigilant “inspection” of Mr. Baker discovered a class of child-labourers, who indeed might truthfully be called *infant* workers. We have from him the general affirmation that “children of very early years are sent to the clay-yards,” and this express personal one : “I have seen a boy of five years old, working among three-and-twenty females, being *broken in* as they call it, to the labour.” I confess that when I first read these words I was taken by surprise : for until I did so I had not myself seen or heard of such tiny or tender toilers. But I had not to inquire long or look far until I discovered that it was not exaggerated, rather under-stated. For be it known that in the brick-yards of England there are the merest dots of children set to clay-carrying, viz., within 4 years of age, while 4½, 5, 6, 7 and 8 is the rule, not the exception, especially in Staffordshire. O ! wicked as cruel, and cruel as unnatural, reversal of the Divine order.

The great Father created the first pair adults ; but ever since, the human family has been multiplied by *children*. God ushers not and would not have us usher them into the

world's cares and struggles, sins and sorrows, all at once. He designs for them a period of nurture and tender ministering as within a circle of light, "keeping" them there beneath His benison until body and mind have gained strength for life's warfare. But here in brick-yards, and alas ! in all too many other departments of child-labour, we have man, aye, even fathers and mothers, antedating the period for "earning," and darkening and staining the sunlight by which a good God would influence "the beginning" of the lowliest of our race. I must hold that it is a libel on Christian legislation, a shame and scandal to the 19th century, that it should not be an impossibility to so put "infants" and such very little children to any sort of work, much more to such work as that of the clay-yards. What a devil-god Mammon is to so pluck out fatherly, motherly feeling, and present in England the spectacle of a child of 3, 4, and 5 years old being "broken in" to this labour ! And yet it is so : my schedule of questions and my own personal inquiries are in agreement that all over our country the merest mites of children are daily, and through 6, 8 or 10 hours and even upwards "kept" at the clay-yards. "Broken in !" It is a photograph-true phrase : for out-and-out it is a "breaking" of body and soul, health and life.

I have specifically called attention to these infant-workers that it may be understood what parents will do and employers allow where the law does not step in to defend the undefended. I want the reader to "search and see" for himself, so as to know independently of Mr. Baker and myself that such things are being done. But parallel with the infant labourers is the general prematurity of the bondage. The Blue Book evidence and my own experience and returns and replies, sent me from score on score of brick-yards all over England, make it incontestably clear that from 7 to 8 is the use-and-wont age at which boys and girls begin to work at this child-labour: while from 8 to 10,



A GIRL CARRYING CLAY "BY THE TASK" TO MAKE THE "TALE OF B"

10 to 12, 12 to 14, 14 to 16 covers the case of hundreds upon hundreds. How, in the name of humanity, is it possible to get manly men or womanly women *physically* out of creatures from whom the *maximum* of toil is exacted with the *minimum* of strength and of recompense? And equally in the name of common sense (if I may be permitted to anticipate my appeal) how should there be protection of the law for child-workers in the Factory Act, the Workshops Act, and the many statutes regulative of labour, and these brick-yard workers be unprotected—uncared for? Once more I must loudly proclaim that it ought to be an impossibility in this our England to find anywhere child-labour from little ones aged as I have stated. Not the clay-yard, but the school, not wearying of back and feet and small hands, but opening of eyes, and brains behind them, ought to occupy these early years. Labour, brow-sweat, hard earnings come soon enough without being thus anticipated and hastened, and without having God's august gift of life stunted, crushed, contorted in its first out-growth. And yet again it is so : again my schedule of questions and inquiries is in agreement, that all over our country 7 to 8, 8 to 10, 10 to 12, 12 to 14, 14 to 16 are the common ages. Within these past weeks, I have over and over again fallen in with lads and girls of 18, 17, 16, 15, 14, 13, 12, who have been working 12, 11, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5 years. Many, very many indeed don't remember a time when they had not to work, work, work, with as weary an exaction as ever the seamstress of Hood's immortal lay had to "stitch, stitch, stitch." I wonder if out of England such premature bondage is findable. I doubt it. I suspect our country stands in bad uniqueness here. Whether or no, it is tampering with the very seed-corn of the great after-harvest of our national life so to suffer child-labour, so to place on young backs and young hearts work fit only for adults, or at any rate lads and girls rising out of their teens : or rather lads alone: for if female labour has been excluded from our collieries and mines and other

places, equally ought it to be excluded from the brick-yards, or at the very least, placed under most stringent limitations and safe-guards.

The Blue Book *data* and calculations as contained in Mr. Baker's sifted evidence, must satisfy that my own paper's figures and estimates were herein, as throughout, far within the mark rather than magnified; so that I must challenge Mr. Manufacturer, and his "men" to meet these FACTS—to disprove them if they can in one iota. They will be better occupied in thinking over such facts as [Mr. Burritt, Mr. Baker and the manufacturer have sent forth with their imprimatur, than in traducing that "fellow Smith." They must answer them—not humble I only—if they can. What then is the work to which these children of 7 to 8, 8 to 10, 10 to 12, and more or less, are put? What is the proportion, that is disproportion, of the work to the workers? The reader has only to turn back on the "Report" to discover that a child of 8 and 10 has a daily "task" of brick-making that involves the carrying from early morning to twilight, five and six tons and upward of wet clay, over journeys yielding an aggregate of 10, 12, 14, 16 miles and upwards. I beg my reader to refer to the Report, and to give me ear, and eye, and conscience to FACTS from my own note-book, corresponding with those of Mr. Baker's Report, and my Congress Paper. I select typical cases. Thus, struck with the puny, miserable look of a small creature, I had him then and there weighed, and though eight years of age, his weight was barely $52\frac{1}{2}$ lbs.; and what was his daily work? To carry 43 lbs. weight of clay on his head an average distance of 15 miles, for an average of 73 hours weekly. Here is another: one small mite of a boy caught my eye among many others, similar in age and years, and engaged in the same kind and amount of work. Again I had the curiosity to have him weighed, and though he was about nine years of age, his weight was within 53 lbs. He, like the former case, had for daily work the carrying backwards and forwards an average

of 44 lbs. weight of clay on his head a distance of 14 miles per day and working 72 hours per week. The *space* traversed is from the clay-heap to the table on which the bricks are made; and any one reckoning the average distances and number of goings and comings, can easily reckon up the sum total as above. The *time* is usually on an average of from six o'clock in the morning to seven and eight o'clock at night in summer time, and a change of employment, rather than reduction of the labour, in winter time. I would now ask the reader's attention to a third case. His age was nine years; his work, walking over a distance of $12\frac{1}{2}$ miles with such a lump of clay as shown within these pages (43 lbs). The distance and weights here, as before, are thus arrived at. A brick maker makes on an average 3,000 bricks per day, weighing about 12 tons: and these 12 tons are carried day by day by two children only, the measurement (in the particular instance) from the clay heap to the brickmaker's table being 35 yards. It is thus found that each child has to travel $6\frac{1}{4}$ miles, with 43 lbs. of clay on his head, and another $6\frac{1}{4}$ miles back to the clay heap. The clay was taken from this child, and the calculations made by me in the presence of both masters and men.* Such, in one broad aspect of it, is the child-labour of the brick-yard children, boys and girls indiscriminately (of which more anon): and I ask whether it is not a scandal to our Legislature that such things as these should be possible in England? Let my adult reader take a weight of 43 lbs., and practically find out what it is for himself continuously to carry 43 lbs. so for a single hour; and then come back to the fact of such mere children being thus occupied all day, and all the week, and all the year. These are but three out of hundreds and hundreds of actual cases recorded by myself, and such are the ordinary ongoings in the ordinary uninspected brick-yards and brick-fields. As the past has been, so very much is the present. Now and again

* See illustration, page 26.

there is evidence of the working of the general spirit of improvement in given brick-yards, and under individual masters; but, taken as a whole, the "use and wont" of work and treatment are stereotyped from generation to generation, as unchangingly as ever any Eastern country can exhibit. So much is this the case, that everywhere I read over again pages of my own early years.

From Mr. Baker's Report—which I can confirm from wide and minute personal inquiry—it is seen that from 14 to 16 hours is the usual working time for the little creatures described, *i.e.*, wherever (as a rule) the Factory Act is inoperative or inspection evaded. Such small workers ought not to be allowed at all, but it is the superlative of wrong to keep them at their work—and such work—for a daily period and a weekly average to which adults in full strength might and do object. Over and above these 14 and 16 hours falls to be added the time consumed in walking to and from their homes—if the sacred name of home may be used of their wretched dwellings. I want the reader to fix the fact on his memory that the brick-yard children's hours are ordinarily *from 5 o'clock in the morning until 8 and even 9 at night, and in very many cases, all night at the kilns for one, two, and even three nights a week.* The mention of the kilns and night-work reminds me of a frequently offered apology or explanation, that it is only during the bright summer months those hours and this work are exacted. I grant that during the summer only the maximum is exacted, and what a maximum! But it is a delusion to suppose that the maximum goes within (as a rule) 12 hours daily. Then, in those brick-yards where there are no sheds—another evil—the children in nine-tenths of them do not get home, but on the contrary, either have the kilns to set or draw, holes to clear out, load bricks, &c., &c., or bring up work reserved for such days. The same remark applies to what is technically called "broken time." Men will

have a "spell" of work and then a "spell" in the ale-house or elsewhere, of lounging and drinking, and all the while the little ones are the sufferers. There is no relief for them through the absence of the "men." Odd jobs, such as are above named, keep them inexorably toiling on and on; and when the men come at mid-week and go at it with a will to make up for "lost time" (aye, lost in a tremendous sense), the poor children are the tools used, over-used, as though they were so many bits of insensate mechanism. I must here also pronounce it a great sorrow and a disgrace that for 14 and 16 hours work should be wrung out of the brick-yard children.

I have no wish to generalise so as to condemn the whole class of brick-yard workmen or workwomen. There are among them the usual good, bad, and indifferent, found in every other department of labour. At the same time, and as the outcome of early training and circumstances, it is simple matter-of-fact that naturally warm and impulsively generous natures become callous. Hence the usage of the "little ones" is of the most brutal kind. Kicks, cuffs, over-hastening, and oaths and curses enough to make the flesh creep, are the too frequent modes of impelling to work. The old-men, monkey-like faces, the shrunken, shivering, cowering, scared looks of many of the children are things not to be imagined. I myself have seen, over and over again, the black eye, the unhealed sore, the swollen head, the bruised body, in little, very little children, that proclaimed sorrowfully their experience to be filled up by cruelty, murderous violence, impetuous passion, and punishment within not an inch but a hair-breadth (and that's just the breadth of a hair), of life. I hesitate not to say that the "Society for the Protection of the Lower Animals" would not allow a tithe of the cruelty perpetrated upon the brick-yard children to be done to the over-worked horse, donkey, and the like. Alas! alas! that Adelaide Procter's

"Homeless" holds so true of many besides those she sings of :—

——— "listen
 To that patter of tiny feet !
 Is it one of your dogs, fair lady
 Who whines in the bleak cold street ?
 Is it one of your silken spaniels,
 Shut out in the snow and sleet ?
 My dogs sleep warm in their baskets,
 Safe from the darkness and wind :
 All the beasts in our Christian England,
 Find pity wherever they go ;
 Those are only the homeless children
 Who are wandering to and fro."

I remember once seeing at one of our great police offices, a gallery of thief and other criminal portraits, each taken by the inevitably true sun. I know not that among the most savage tribes I could find such faces—so hard, so sensual, so eager, so suspicious, so emptied out of manhood, so be-cunninged. But if the reader will only turn him, or her, to the brick-yards of England, there will be seen young-old faces, out of the eyes of which the light of hope has died in its very dawning ; little creatures crushed, driven, hurt, after the type of slavery. The "Cry of the Children" goes up to God, and if much longer unheard by us, must bring down His judgment.

The statement of my own record of a given number of girls, whose after history I have been able to trace, contained in my Congress Paper, gave special offence at Tunstall, and to a manufacturer and his men there. I repeat it. It is as follows:—"Out of the many hundreds of brick-yard girls whose cases I have personally marked, not more than a dozen have become decent and respectable wives." Let my statement be read in the light of Mr. Baker's in the Blue-Book, as sent him by the brick-yard manufacturer, from whom he received the valuable communication therein given. Then listen to what Mr. Mundella, M.P., said in his place



A BRICK-CARRYING GIRL CRAVING HER PITTANCE.



in the House of Commons, in the debate on the Trades Union Bill. "There was NO TRADE in which ignorance, vice, and immorality prevail to a greater extent than amongst the *employés* in brick and tile-yards." The thing is notorious; and it is audacious to impertinence in Mr. Manufacturer to ignore it. I have no desire to give gratuitous pain to the females of Tunstall, Chesterton, or anywhere; but facts in my possession demonstrate that in all brick-yards, to a fearful extent, typical examples of the uttermost abominations of immorality, prostitution, impurity, and loathsome talk and cursing are to be found; while it is almost the exception to have a married woman who has been brought up in the brick-yard, unfallen previous to marriage. The lewdness, the boldness, the unblushing familiarity, the impudence of gesture, the matter-of-course falling in with the most profligate indulgences, the open turning-aside of mere boys and girls in order to intercourse, the setting on to it of such by the men, the meeting with a roar by men and women of the discovery of such, the foul songs, the fouler stories, the filthy jokes, the as filthy tricks and hitting of each other, the low amusements, of the brick-yards through the intermixture of men and women, lads and girls, and the night-work, are such as cannot be printed. The precociousness of the knowledge of things children ought never to know, much more do, is one of the most terrible elements of the evil training. The physical constitution is emasculated by it, the moral polluted, the conscience stamped out. Then I feel confident that I am under, not over, stating, when I affirm that 75 per cent. of the children in the brick-yards can scarcely read or write. I could produce examples of as heathen ignorance in the plainest things,—such as every child in England ought to be taught,—in these children, as Africa in its innermost regions could furnish. O! that the churches would awake to their duty, to "go out" and "bring in" ere it be too late, these neglected "Lambs of the Flock." I have not a

syllable to say against missions to foreign lands. . Not too much, but too little is being done there. Not too many, but too few missionaries are sent forth. I believe if only the Spirit of God "revives" all our Churches of every name, England will penitently own her Christianhood (professed) has not done a tithe for the evangelization of the world which ought and might have been done. But conceding all that, I must demand a deeper interest in home-missions, a truer concern for our home-heathens, a tenderer care for the temporal and eternal welfare of the children. The immorality and impurities, the foulnesses and license abounding in the brick-yards, are eating out the very life of the community. O, my fellow-men, haste to the rescue! Save the children if you would save England!

Such are the main points in Mr. Baker's report and my own paper, to which I claim, respectfully yet urgently, every reader's attention. I put it to every candid mind if my *data* in the Congress paper be not "established, strengthened, settled," by Mr. Burritt and the Blue Book; and I further put it to every humane reader, high or low, if such a condition of matters do not call for redress?

To show still further how the things strike others, I would bring together a series of articles—a few out of many—originated by my efforts in behalf of the children of the brick-yards. I reproduce them in integrity and completeness, for however willing to keep myself and my humble though earnest endeavours out of sight, I know that any excisions would be misconstrued, and accusations of "garbling" and so on be hurled against me. I begin with an admirably-toned paper in the old-established *Weekly Dispatch*, of London. Here it is, and may God bless the writer, whoever he be.

"CHILDREN IN BRICK-FIELDS.

"The Easter holidays are over and almost forgotten. Yet, while they lasted, how precious and delightful did they prove to thousands, to whom they formed a welcome break in the dull monotonous routine of industrial life. Like Whitsuntide and Christmas, Easter is a time of high holiday, not only in England but in Christendom, and as such has been spent in different ways by different people. Some have gaily hied them away to the Lakes or taken a return-ticket to the Moors, others have rushed off on the wings of the wind, or rather per railway express, to some well-known spots, Arcadias in miniature, and in a 'fine frenzy' searched after impaired health over hill and dale; strolled through copse and wood, trampling the early primrose; or they took their meditative way along the country side, glorious as it now is with its carpet of green, its air laden with perfume of violets, its hedgerows and coppices bespangled with silver, and its trees filled with choirs of early songsters attuning their welcome songs to the spirit of Spring. But in none of these ways have we spent our holidays, neither have the small people whom we have favoured with our company. In the very unpicturesque brick-yards of Staffordshire, Derbyshire, and Leicestershire have we passed the Easter recess, surrounded by a pigmy army of boys and girls, who, with matted hair and naked feet, have worked and swarmed around us like human bees. Like bees have they industriously worked, say rather slaved, all the livelong day, gathering, not honey, but the wet and miry clay for their Egyptian taskmasters. From early morning to the close of day does this Lilliputian army of tiny Amazons and incipient Herculeases rush hither and thither with their burdens of clay, serving those whose maw is as insatiable as the grave, and who, ever and anon, like the leech's daughter, cry out for more! The air of England is popularly supposed to be fatal to slavery! It has been said that the moment a slave touches the sacred soil of England he is free, and that no sooner does he breathe its air than his shackles fall. This may be true of the blacks, but it is a delusion and a snare as regards the whites. Whilst the country is ringing with plaudits bestowed upon those who battle for the extension of

the suffrage to men, whilst our political philanthropists are striving for the enfranchisement of women, whilst the Educational Bill is torn to rags by rival factions, whilst all these are thus straining at a gnat, the camel of English child-slavery, as practised in the counties we have mentioned, is allowed to flourish. Philanthropists are seeking out new fields for their benevolence, missionary societies new vineyards. Beggars have a Marquis Townsend, and convicted thieves a Ned Wright, but the children of our brick-yards have no Wilberforce. Every other form of human misery has its apostle and its ameliorator, but the champion of little slaves of clay, where is he? Echo sadly whispers back, Where? But we err; they have a champion, and it is owing to his numerous letters calling attention to the subject in the daily and provincial papers, and to his communications to the Home Department, that this question has been taken up. We refer to Mr. George Smith, of Coalville. To him *les misérables* of our clay-pits should offer their most grateful thanks, and to him the public should award a meed of praise for the persistent efforts he has made to show up in its true colour this latest phase of constructive cruelty. Now, what are the facts of this crying abuse? and what the form it assumes? The yards we have visited are under the direction of managers who let out the work of making bricks to men at per thousand. These men—who, it may be stated, are on what is termed ‘piece work’ (that is, get as much as they can earn)—are stationed at large tables, where they make the bricks; and on each side of them troops of boys *and girls*, ranging from eight years of age to eighteen, some three parts, and others half naked, whilst the rest are as ragged as robins. The children get four shillings a week, work as hard as they may. There they stand, silent and still, like the warriors of Rhoderick Dhu, until the signal is given to commence. Then off they go. First one ragged semi-nude contingent runs wildly down an inclined plane into the dark and miry bowels of the earth, where, with a sort of elongated cheese knife, they slice out about fifty pounds of clay each, and in single file return with their lumps of dirt upon their heads. Some march nimbly along, whilst the smaller ones, the little girls with short skirts and bare legs, trudge along more slowly. Arrived at the table, they bow their heads and the *clay is deposited* before the ogre, who, with nimble hands,

fashions it into those square lumps called bricks. It is then that the other contingent, in all respects like the sister brigade, commence their part of the work, trotting briskly to the spot allotted for the reception of their burden. And so the ball goes on. No cessation, no shirking, no stopping for breath, and woe betide the discreded youngster who falters or delays! At him the ogre at the board shies a lump of clay. As the day wears on, their march is slower; their heads sink slightly between the shoulders, their faces and foreheads are besmeared with clay, their hair is matted, and their legs and arms become of the colour of the clay they carry. Even as they return for clay do the carriers turn aside to a recess, and bowing their heads to the ground, take dust in their hands, and throw it upon their heads, arms, and naked feet—not, as might be supposed, in symbolism of the utter degradation of their servitude, but to prevent the clay sticking to their heads and other parts of the body. This is one form of the toil. There are other forms not so laborious or dirty, but equally unfitted to the boys and girls who thus early learn to ‘labour and to wait’ upon the brick-maker. The letter which appears below, from Mr. George Smith, details the different phases of their employment. How boys and girls, indiscriminately mixed, hustle each other in their avocation. How the girls, thus early brought into contact with the other sex, lose every trace of maiden modesty. He tells, or could tell—as could we—of the atrocious (the word is used advisedly) immorality that is engendered by this mixed labour. The children are grossly ignorant, the only teaching they get being at the Sunday school, (and little of that). The girls are utterly demoralised, and do not seem to know it. They grow up, some of them, and in their turn become wives and mothers, dooming their progeny to the same toil. There is no law to prevent it. These brick plantations are under no kind of Government supervision or control—that is, where less than 50 persons are employed. In these hot-beds of vice ‘upon horror’s head horrors accumulate,’ and were we only darkly to hint at the abominable actions committed in them, even the face of man would be suffused with a blush, and a thrill would pass through him to think that such things can be allowed to be perpetrated, by avaricious parents and greedy workmen, upon the young children employed in brick-yards. There

is a remedy, a short, sharp remedy. No Factory Act will do. There must be no paltering with this evil. Desperate diseases require desperate remedies, and the panacea for the horrors of the brick-yards of these counties is the prohibition of the employment of infants under 12 years of age, and the employment of girls at any age. If our visit to the brick-yards of the three counties enumerated this Eastertide, shall have the effect of calling the attention of those able to deal with the evil to its enormities, it will not have been in vain, and we shall have to rejoice that this latter phase of slavery, like the agricultural gang-system, has become a thing of the past.

It will be noticed that the writer in the *Dispatch*, from his personal knowledge and observation, verifies every statement advanced by me. May the burning words find entrance into many hearts.

On the publication of the preceding paper, I addressed a short letter to the Editor, as follows, on (more especially) female labour :—

“TO THE EDITOR OF ‘THE WEEKLY DISPATCH.’

“MR. EDITOR,—In these days of enlightenment, when the word ‘progress’ seems to be stamped on everything we see around us, and when there are numbers of benevolent persons who are ready to assist both with their time and money to alleviate suffering and misery, whether inflicted on animals or human beings, there seems to be one class of the community who have hitherto escaped observation and sympathy : I refer to the employment of girls at brick and tile-yards, as it is practised in the midland and other counties. Any one witnessing the girls thus employed, as they are, amongst rough and uneducated boys in this country, carrying bricks up ladders, clay on their heads, with matted hair—carrying bricks in and out of the hot kiln, loading bricks in trucks, running bricks away from moulders—doing all this often in a semi-nude state, and without restrictions as to the hours of labour—must be unfavourably impressed with the conduct and character they will acquire, and the

part they will play in the drama of life. Yes, I may say further, that I have seen hundreds of girls working in brick-yards, and at the present day I do not know of a dozen (having carefully watched their after-progress) that have turned out clean, tidy, careful, and respectable wives; and whose fault is it? It cannot be the fault of the children; but it is traceable to causes. Firstly, the law negatively allows it; secondly, the parents enforce it; thirdly, the men employing them encourage them; and, fourthly, the masters themselves connive at it. Thus the girls are permitted to drag out a miserable existence in our brick-yards, in many cases ending in ruin of body and soul, unheeded by philanthropists, uncared for by their natural protectors, and left out in the cold by Parliament. I say again most emphatically that if there are any children in England needing help, it is the children employed at brick and tile-yards, and especially brick-yard girls.

“Acts of Parliament have been passed prohibiting boys from climbing chimneys, dogs from drawing barrows in the streets, girls from working at collieries, and yet girls are permitted to engage in work which to them is disgraceful and demoralising. But, it may be objected, if we do not thus employ them, what are we to do with our girls? My answer to this is, train them for those situations in life which are natural to them, and not let boys be doing girls’ work, and *vice versa*, as is the tendency now-a-days. While I am writing this letter a sad accident has happened in this neighbourhood, which would not have occurred had all brick and tile-yards, irrespective of numbers employed, been under Government inspection. A boy under 12 years of age working in a brick-yard, accidentally fell into a small pond, between half-past six and seven o’clock this evening, and was drowned. This is another proof out of many thousands that something more ought to be done to protect the rising generation.

“GEORGE SMITH.

“Coalville, Leicester, 1868.”

The Primitive Methodist (London) has done yeoman’s service for my pleadings, by immediately reprinting from time to time letters evoked by circumstances. I submit

here one out of various articles to be found in its pages ; and I trust that the many "sons and daughters" belonging to the Primitive Methodists will weigh its energetic presentation of the case.

"BRICK-YARD CHILDREN.

"In our issue of February 24th we called attention to several letters written by Mr. George Smith, of Coalville, Leicestershire, which had appeared in various metropolitan and provincial newspapers, describing the lamentable condition of children in brick and tile-yards in various parts of our country, and hinted that we should most likely resume the discussion of the subject. Since then, Mr. Smith, who is one of our local preachers, and a member of the General Committee, has published several more appeals to the country. He has also brought the subject before the members of her Majesty's government, and seems thoroughly in earnest to accomplish his purpose. What then is the grievance of which he complains, and which he so generously and untiringly seeks to redress ? Is any part of the population of this land suffering hardships which should provoke the interference of the other part ? Is there any reason for legislative action beyond what has already been done to ameliorate the condition of *employés* in brick-yards ? In 1869 some of the boys employed in the brick-yards of Leicestershire and Derbyshire were about eight years of age. Brick-yard workers eight years of age ? And what could these infants do ? What task could any man find heart to impose on such little creatures ? 'Each one was engaged in carrying from forty pounds to forty-five pounds weight of clay on his head ?' Forty or forty-five pounds weight of clay—three stones weight of clay on the head of a child eight years of age ! Monstrous ! Barbarous ! And how long was the little slave subjected to this inhuman drudgery ? 'Thirteen hours a day, excepting the time allowed for meals, and in that time the little loaded worker would traverse a distance of fourteen miles.' Fourteen miles a day for a child of eight years to walk, and this, day after day and week after week, is vastly too much without any load at all. But to carry three stones of soft clay on

his head while trudging so many weary miles is almost too much to be imagined. And can parents be found whose necessities are so terrible, or whose paternal affections are so blunted that they will permit this? Then, if parents cannot or will not save their children from such intolerable servitude, philanthropists and Christians should. Reader, are you a father and in comfortable circumstances? Imagine your little boy, who is only eight or nine years of age—scarcely old enough to be sent to a boarding-school—compelled to rise every morning at five o'clock, and prepare for thirteen hours' work. Think what trouble you would have to wake him each morning and prepare him for his long, laborious task. Think of him toiling under a burning sun, covered with clay, carrying a heavy load on his little neglected head. And, during the day, the little weary worker is hurried along by savage words, and often brutal blows. As the day wears away, how that tired worker longs for the final hour; and when at last it comes, toil-worn and weary the little one crawls—almost too tired to walk—homewards, gets his frugal supper, and sleeps only to prepare for another dreaded day. Could the life of a negro slave be worse than this? Hope makes a difference. But hope has scarcely entered this little toiler's mind at present. How are the physical proportions of the child to find full and proper development? And what of his mind? When are its capacities to be cultivated and expanded? Evening culture is impossible. Sunday-schools can do but little for a child so over-wrought on week days. The winter months cannot be expected to accomplish much for a child so circumstanced. Then the moral nature of the child must be dwarfed and vitiated by his surroundings. He is treated more like a mere beast of burden than a young immortal possessing intellectual and moral capabilities. Nevertheless some of these very hardly circumstanced little fellows have noble powers both of head and heart. Fairly treated they would be among the foremost of their race, and would bless mankind widely and richly by their efforts. Then, is there any absolute necessity that the evils of which Mr. Smith complains, and which any person may witness, should continue? Have we not older youths and men in the country in sufficient numbers to produce our bricks and tiles without employing these children of tender age? Cannot we

supplement or supersede human labour by mechanical contrivances, and save these little toilers from their terrible toils? Have we not wealth enough in the country to create what machinery we need, and pay a fair price for the labour of older and stronger limbs? If these inquiries must be answered affirmatively then surely the employment of children in brick-yards should cease. The Government of the country is now engaged with the question of education; and whether religious education comes within the province of governmental obligations or not, is earnestly disputed; but that Government should legislate to secure proper physical and social conditions all parties admit. Then surely the employment of children in brick-yards should have the immediate and earnest attention of our Parliament. If a case needs making out, only let official inquiry be instituted, and facts, startling and almost heart-rending, will easily be obtained. The letters of Mr. Smith alone afford sufficient proof that something should be done, and soon."

I take the following from *The Builder*, which speaks with an authority not to be gainsaid, and I must gratefully acknowledge that from it and the scientific journals generally, the question has received sympathetic attention and honourable discussion. Even where means suggested have been traversed, I have found my critics as one, in the end sought to be gained, and that is what I prize. If better counsel than mine can be given, better remedies presented, by all means let mine be superseded; but as a practical man, and as having had to do now for upwards of 30 years with the brick-yards, I may claim some consideration in dealing with the question involved. More particularly I must be permitted to regard many theoretical difficulties and objections as merely theoretical, and such as disappear when the "inspection" is actually carried out.

"Years have passed since we first pointed out the hardships which children employed in brick-yards suffer, the evil conditions to which they are exposed, and the demoralisation and physical degradation that follow. More recently, we

again drew attention to the subject; and we are glad to find others doing so. Mr. G. Smith, of Coalville, has been moving earnestly, with a view to excite a feeling in behalf of children so employed. He says truly of brick-yard workers in Leicestershire and Derbyshire in 1869—"Some of the boys employed are about eight years old, and each one is engaged carrying from 40 lbs. to 45 lbs. weight of clay on his head, to the maker, for thirteen hours per day, traversing a distance of fourteen miles. The girls employed are between nine and ten years of age. They are not engaged in carrying clay on their heads the whole of the day, but are partly occupied in taking bricks to the kiln. Some of the children are in a semi-nude state. Many of them in Derbyshire work what is called 'eight-hour shifts,' which, reckoning from twelve o'clock on Sunday night to twelve o'clock on Saturday night following, make a weekly labour of seventy-two hours. To ascertain really what work these children have to do, we must suppose a brickmaker (not over quick in his operations) making 3,500 bricks per day. The distance the boy or girl has to travel with mould, which weighs $4\frac{1}{2}$ lbs., and brick in it $10\frac{1}{2}$ lbs., one way, and back to the brickmaker with mould only, is, upon the average twelve yards. This multiplied by 3,500 makes the distance nearly twenty-four miles that each child has to walk, every day, carrying this weight with it.

"We feel strongly that girls should not be employed in brick and tile-yards on any account, as the work is entirely unfit for them. To see the girls engaged in such works, and at such unseasonable hours, mixed up with boys of the roughest class, must convey to the mind some idea of the sort of wives, with such training, they will make, and the kind of influence they will eventually bring to bear on society."

For mingled sarcastic humour and sound common sense (the most uncommon of all sense), few communications exceed one that appeared in the *Potteries Examiner*—an organ of "Potteries," and like employments. The wit is not untouched of sadness: and I believe the reader will thank me for reprinting it *in extenso*.

“BRICK-YARD CHILDREN—A FLEA IN THE
EAR OF GOVERNMENT.

“England is governed by the ear; and by an ear that is sometimes suspiciously long. This ear has to be tickled before it will listen, and it is not any straw that will do it. The ear has been wont to catch the sound of a lord’s eyelid when he winked, and to remain deaf when a poor man bawled. It is much the same now, but there has lately arisen a cuckoo cry of ‘popular legislation’ at the sound of which *the* ear has—if the simile is allowable—pricked up its ears, anxious to do the thing that was popular. If a great wrong is suffered by any subject the Government sees with other people’s eyes, and gathers its knowledge through what Bunyan would call ‘ear-gate.’ Government grants what is demanded, and not what is wanted. Whatever makes a noise they hear, and if fame is to be obtained by taking it up *the* ear is tickled. They balance the popularity to be gained, and *sometimes* the amount of good to be done, by the amount of opposition and the *sacred* vested interests they have to overcome. A government led by the ears is always behind, instead of being before the people. Sometimes in questions of great national policy this is best, but not when the question is the application of recognised principles of legislation to remove proved abuses, or prevent suffering known to exist among the people. For a government to be behind is to prove that it has no claim to exist. The government that passed the Factory Act after its ear had been aroused to attention by the earnest words of others, only went as far as it was led by the ear to go, though if that government had used its eyes, it would have been seen that there was as much necessity for a restriction of the hours of labour, and for an enforced attendance at school part of the week, among children in other industries, as among the factory children of Lancashire. Years after, when a government was earwigged again upon this subject, the Factory Acts were extended, and after that they were extended again, and another Act, called the Workshops Regulation Act, was passed, bringing the principle of the Factory Act down to workshops in which fifty people were employed. No doubt that was intended as a final measure,

and our law-makers would conclude that they had brought all children that it was necessary to place under the half-time systems, restriction of the hours of labour, and the time at which that labour should be commenced.

"It is certain that some of the children that most require to be protected by the Factory Acts are now utterly neglected, and through the slow legislation that only sees its way through its ear, we have children still in England whose lot is as bad and degrading a slavery as could be invented.

"One prominent instance will be sufficient for our purpose; and if it does not prove a flea in the ear of Government, it will be a proof of indifference to suffering that we now scarcely credit the present Government with possessing.

"The paper 'On the employment of brick-yard children considered in relation to the Factory and Workshops Act,' which we published last week, and which was lately read at the Social Science Congress, reveals a state of things in those yards which we know to be in the main true of brick-yards in this district, as well as Leicester and Derby. There may be now less carrying of clay than Mr. Smith describes in his interesting paper, the clay being in many cases wheeled to the maker of the bricks, but the hardships endured by the children, the long hours of labour, the lax moral discipline, the ignorance and low moral tone that he alleges prevails in brick-yards are quite true, in too many cases, we believe. We have known lads in earthenware manufactories compelled to carry lumps of clay that have forced the head into the neck, and almost cracked the back bone of the lad, or girl, when by thoughtless men they have been made to carry pieces beyond their strength; and many lads have been stunted in their growth through the folly, and in some cases—we speak plainly—the cruelty of working potters. But what must be the condition of those children whose lot Mr. Smith describes in his paper and other letters, who, when weighed, were found to be 52½ lbs. themselves; and yet they were employed for 73 hours a week in carrying on their heads 43 lbs. of wet clay a distance of 15 miles a day. Could the cruelty of hard task-masters go farther? Mr. Smith informs us that he, when a lad, had to work in the brick-yards, and on one occasion after the customary heavy day's work he had to carry 1,300 nine-inch bricks

from the maker ; and that the distance walked was fourteen miles ; seven out of which were traversed with eleven pounds weight of clay in his arms, besides lifting the unmade clay and carrying it some distance to the maker ; the total quantity carried being five and a half tons. The hours of labour—that are *unrestricted by law where there are less than fifty in a yard*—are as a rule 13 a day. A brickmaker, not over fast in his operations is said to make 3,500 bricks per day. The distance the boy or girl has to travel with mould, which weighs $4\frac{1}{2}$ lbs., and brick in it $10\frac{1}{2}$ lbs., one way, and back to the brickmaker with mould only, is upon the average twelve yards. This multiplied by 3,500 makes the distance nearly twenty-four miles that each child has to walk every day carrying this weight with it.

“These instances show how the weary bodies of the little toilers are slaved ; and when the body is so overburdened, while it is young and tender, what can the state of the mind be but stunted, and clouded with ignorance ? The children often commence to work in the brick-yards, Mr. Smith shows, when they are only eight years of age, and sometimes before that. They know nothing when they begin, and know the same to the end of life, except the vice and immorality they have learned from their elders. Their parents have been trained in the same school before them, and have become brutalised by their own hard life, so that they do not care for rightly developing either the body, mind, or morals of their offspring. ‘My lad must be content without learning, the same as I had to be,’ said a father to an Inspector. And this neglect of their children’s education is not produced by poverty always, for Mr. Smith gives an instance in one of his letters of ten children belonging to one family earning amongst them £5 a week, while none of them could read or write, though they might have been educated for a penny a week.

“Oaths and blows are more familiar to these little brick-yard children than blessings and kisses, and the whole nature gradually becomes hardened. That is the effect upon the boys, but what is the influence exercised upon the girls ? They are completely unsexed. God knows that it is bad enough for girls and young women to be employed in ‘wedging clay’ or ‘running moulds’ in an earthenware manufactory, but the influence of brick-yard training is

even worse, and we can readily credit Mr. Smith when he says that 'All goodness and purity seem to be stamped out of these people; and, were I to relate what could be related, the whole country would become sickened and horrified. Out of the many hundreds of brick-field girls, whose career I have personally marked, not more than a dozen have become decent and respectable wives.' Poor wives make poor homes and poor mothers; and those make badly trained and ill-taught children.

"The labour not only of girls, but women also, ought not to be allowed on brick-fields. When Mr. Mundella said that 'ignorance, vice, and immorality prevail to a greater extent among the *employés* in brick-yards than in any other trades,' he simply stated the obvious effects of obvious causes, viz., early and excessive toil, long hours, total want of education, the promiscuous mixing of the sexes in work generally unsuited to lads engaged in it, but always unsuited to the girls. Is there no remedy for this horrible state of things? Children in other trades are compelled to work half-time until they are thirteen years old, and cannot commence to work before they are eight years old. They are educated by the half-time system; and the places where they work are inspected by Government officials. What have the little brick-yard children done that they should be condemned to slavery from their infant days, and not have the protecting and fostering care of a good law thrown round them, to protect them from the effects of their parents' ignorance, vice, and selfishness? Mr. George Smith in his paper recommends the only course Government can take to secure that these children shall be trained up as Christians, and not as English heathens. He asks that all brick-yards be placed under the supervision of Government inspectors under the Workshops Regulation Act—or that Act extended to suit the case—that children should not be allowed to work in these yards until they are 12 years of age, to work not more than 8 hours a day for the first 2 years, from 14 to 18, 10 hours per day; and he would not allow a child to commence work that had not attended school for three years. We give Mr. Smith's recommendations because, coming from a practical man, they are worth attention. The attention of Government should at once be called to this important defect in our industrial legislation

that leaves out the children in brick-yards from the protection of the Workshops Act merely because there does not happen, in many cases, to be 50 employed in the field. Is not this a specimen of legislation of the ear—the long ear—kind. Perhaps our governors have not heard of the oppressed little brick-yard children before; let them heed Mr. Smith's suggestions, and then no one will hear of them again as the degraded and toil-worn slaves of the clay."

The witty, and wise as witty, paper, the *Figaro*, has ever a word for the helpless: and I accept heartily its various kindly allusions to my humble efforts on behalf of the children. Here is a clever *bit* from a recent number:—

"We are a most humane and most virtuous people. What a blessing it would be if other nations were as benevolent and pure!

"Bother the Divorce Court, the Baby-farming, the Social Evil, the Drunkenness, and the Wife-beating! To be sure, we have our faults; but then we are so excessively humane on the whole.

"We have a 'Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.' We should put down pigeon-shooting if it were not patronized by the Prince of Wales. We shudder at vivisection, even for the sake of science.

"Well, philanthropists, have you seen a paper which was read at the Social Science Congress by Mr. George Smith, 'On the Employment of Children in Brick-fields?'

"Children with bare feet, and otherwise scantily clothed, have, in all weathers, to work for thirteen hours a day for wages not sufficient to buy them bread. Their employment consists of carrying about 40 lbs. of damp clay on their heads to the brickmakers, and carrying the made bricks to the floors on which they are placed to dry. Thus loaded, they walk, on an average, 20 miles a day.

"Both sexes are so employed; and, as the children advance in years their early training results in the grossest immorality. Mr. George Smith says:—'All goodness and purity seem to be stamped out of these people; were I to relate what could be related, the whole country would become horrified. Out of the many hundreds of brick-field girls, whose career I have personally marked, not more than a dozen have become decent and respectable wives.'

“Perhaps Mr. Bruce will allow an independent member to introduce such an amendment of the Workshops Acts as will put an end to this scandal. We would ask the Home Secretary himself to take the matter up, only we know that the right hon. gentleman is too much engaged in grand schemes, which come to nothing, to attend to a matter of utility. Perhaps, as the House of Lords has so little work, Lord Shaftesbury will introduce a Bill, and so save the much occupied Commons the trouble of discussing the details.”

Again *Figaro* must be given audience with its trenchant question:—

“WHICH IS RIGHT ?

“Those who chivalrously engage in the commendable labour of rectifying social abuses, very frequently have to undergo a species of social martyrdom; to be reviled, misrepresented, and even persecuted by those who would retain things as they are, instead of helping to make things as they should be. There has never existed a social anomaly or evil but it has found apologists and defenders, who seem to think that their own interests ought to be consulted before those of the community. We have just had a characteristic illustration of this. At the recent Congress of the Social Science Association, at Newcastle, Mr. George Smith read a painfully instructive and interesting paper on the condition of the children employed in brick-fields, an abstract of which paper appeared in these columns. A tile-maker at Tunstall, in Staffordshire, has just taken upon himself the task of disputing the accuracy of Mr. Smith’s statements. He says:—‘These have spread amazement and horror among those who know nothing of the trade, and intense indignation among those engaged in it, especially at these works, the scene of Mr. Smith’s earliest and saddest experiences, as also, despite the barbarous treatment he was subject to, of his labours until he attained the age of manhood.’ He then goes on to attack Mr. Smith’s truthfulness, and, by way of showing that the condition of the children is not so bad as represented, he quotes a letter from an Inspector of Factories, which letter runs as follows:—

‘In reply to your inquiries, I have pleasure in stating that, in the course of my duties as certifying surgeon under the Factory Act, I have never examined a more healthy and robust lot of young persons and children than those who have come under my notice at your father’s brick and tile works.’

“In reply, Mr. Smith declares this to be the first attempt at casting discredit upon his statements, and he reiterates, ‘as solemnly and emphatically as language enables him, that the aggregate of statistics brought together by him from all quarters, and anxiously verified and sifted; the innumerable letters containing facts as to the selfish overworking of these children, received from the various localities; the ever-increasing tragedies of immorality and profligacy among these *employés*; the results of personal examination of their homes and occupation, and of their subsequent careers as husbands, wives, fathers, and mothers, of the boys and girls trained in this class of labour, reveal a state of things disgraceful to civilisation—not to speak of Christianity—but which, all the signs of the times made plain to him, will not long escape the vigilance of some of the noble men now in our Government.’ This is plain speaking; but Mr. Smith’s accuracy is vouched for by another gentleman, Mr. Carter, who says:—

‘I have seen girls and boys half naked at work with the clay, remorselessly hurried to keep pace with the demands of an ogre, who fashions it into bricks, and like young Oliver Twist asks for *more*. These, instead of staggering with their loads from morn to noon, and from noon to dewy eve, should have been at home or at school.’

“It seems to us that the matter cannot be allowed to rest here. We must have a parliamentary commission appointed to enquire into the whole thing. This, we believe, is what Mr. Smith desires.”

As of old, the followers of the Lord were taunted, that none of the dignitaries, or “great,” “noble,” “wise,” “mighty” men “believed” in Him, so I have been over and over told if the cause were as urgent and momentous as I represent, it would be taken up by *The Times*, the newspaper of the civilised world. I have usually found that a

movement must have made good headway before the "thunderer" will deign to patronise, and then the patronage is loud and cumbersome enough. How often have our philanthropists and reformers had to "wait" for recognition from the supreme newspaper! So that if the case of the brick-yard children has not hitherto been dealt with by *The Times*, it is only what might have been looked for. Now that light begins to break, I anticipate that some fine day I shall wake to find a leader taking "George Smith" and his fellow-labourers by the hand. Right welcome shall it be; but it were nobler, greater, worthier, were *The Times* to help one up the hill difficulty, instead of extracting a five pound note for an advertisement of wrong-doing which was as much the concern of *The Times* as mine, or any other seeking to remove the evils.

Anxious to win the attention of *The Times'* myriad readers I ventured to address a short letter to the editor, but no! it couldn't appear, except as an "advertisement," charge £5. Well, it was not the first or fiftieth five pounds I had spent in the enterprise, and so I remitted the fine, and the letter duly appeared amid the throng and crush of other advertisements. I deem it right to insert it.

"THE CHILDREN EMPLOYED AT BRICK AND TILE-YARDS.

"TO THE EDITOR OF 'THE TIMES.'

"SIR,—I should not trespass on your columns were it not for the urgency and seriousness of the matter. That something should be done for the children employed at brick and tile-yards is without doubt, but how to render this assistance is the question.

"That 'the half-time system,' as advocated by those who are not practically acquainted with brick and tile-yards, iron-works, &c., may suit trades such as cotton, silk, and other manufactures, where the work is light and the children warm and dry (and it is the many hours the children work

daily that they have to be protected against) I will not deny; but the application of the system to brick and tile-yards would be attended with much irritation and discontent among the parents, masters, and children, for the following reasons:—

“1. The children employed at brick and tile-yards generally reside a long distance from their work, in some instances from four to five miles, and would have to go home in the middle of the day to change their clothes before (owing to the nature of the work) they would be fit for school; and, taking into consideration the fact that many of the children only possess one suit of clothes, an immense difficulty would present itself, in fact an insuperable difficulty at present.

“2. The work at brick and tile-yards, as is the case with agriculture, depends in a great measure upon the weather, and when the day or week come to be divided between two children, who would probably share the day between them, it would occasionally happen that one of them would have all the work. Much unpleasantness would arise from this.

“3. The most important argument is the childrens' health and education, which demand that they should not be allowed to commence work at eight, nine, ten, or even eleven years of age, as is suggested by some.

“A few weeks ago I drew your attention to the case of a boy I had weighed, to give some idea of what brick-yard children have to undergo, and will now give you another instance. I had a child weighed very recently, and although he was somewhat over eight years of age, he weighed but 52½ lbs., and was employed carrying 43 lbs. weight of clay on his head an average distance of 15 miles daily, and worked 73 hours a week. This is only an average case of what many thousands of poor children are doing in England at the present time, and we need not wonder at their stunted and haggard appearance, when we take into account the tender age at which they are sent to their Egyptian tasks. Their education, too, is necessarily neglected. I know a family where there are 10 children, whose united earnings will average £5 per week, but not one of them can read or write. This, too, in a neighbourhood where they could have received a sound rudimentary education for one penny per week. Two of the younger children

in this case are working in brick-yards, and are under 10 years of age.

"The plan so long advocated by myself in several of your daily and other contemporaries, is not to allow the half-time system at all, or the children to commence working before 12 years of age, and then to produce a certificate of having been at a day-school for at least three years before that time, and that between the ages of seven and twelve.

"To this plan I do not think that either the masters or the parents could reasonably object. I may add that the foregoing conclusions have been arrived at after many years' practical acquaintance with brick and tile-yards and collieries, and masters, children, and parents. That the above is the only plan which will call forth the hearty co-operation of all persons concerned, is my decided conviction. To deprive the children of the benefits that would accrue from its adoption much longer, will be acting with an unfairness to them that is not practised on children in other branches of manufacture.

"Yours truly,

"GEORGE SMITH.

"Spring Cottage, Coalville, Leicester,

"November 22nd, 1869."

I wonder by what casuistry the infallible editor of *The Times* excluded such a letter from his ordinary letter-column. If *The Times* be not open to plead on behalf of the children except by five-pound advertisements, few will be able to afford to speak to the public through it. Seriously, it is a black-burning shame that *The Times* should be deaf to the "Cry of the Children,"—as one day it may find out.

As might have been expected, the Press came down on *The Times* with a will, and various organs (of all shades of politics) transferred the letter to their columns as such, and not as an advertisement. The *Pall Mall Gazette* thus spoke out :—

"There is an advertisement in *The Times* of yesterday, signed 'George Smith,' calling attention to the condition of children employed in brick and tile-yards. And certainly, if the facts stated are correct, there would appear to be some

room for improvement. The advertiser says that he recently caused a child employed in this labour to be weighed, and, although he was somewhat over eight years old, he weighed but 52½ lbs., and was engaged in carrying 43 lbs. weight of clay on his head an average distance of fifteen miles daily, and worked seventy-three hours a week. This, we are assured, is only an average case of what many thousands of poor children in England are doing at the present time. There can be no doubt that the whole question requires a careful investigation, which it will probably some day receive; but it is melancholy to reflect how many children have probably been injured and killed under existing arrangements, and how many more continue to succumb under burdens almost as heavy as themselves, before we have rubbed our eyes sufficiently, and thoroughly awakened to the knowledge of the fact that we are as yet very far removed from civilisation and are daily permitting horrors to be enacted which, if we were a little more sensitive to anything but our immediate pecuniary interests, ought to make us thoroughly ashamed of ourselves."

These opinions may suffice. I take the present opportunity of returning my heart-felt thanks for the readiness with which the Press generally have opened their columns to my communications, and their spontaneous kindness in reprinting letters and papers sent elsewhere from time to time. It were easy to multiply newspaper and periodical paragraphs, but my intended space wanes, and I have sought to give representative quotations.

I find room in closing this portion of my Statement and Appeal for the following:—

"On June the 20th, 1871, after my first edition had been in circulation for some time, I was surprised to find "a man in buttons" calling upon me at my lodging in Great Russell Street, who turned out to be *The Times'* messenger, with a letter from the manager, Mr. Mowbray Morris, the substance of which was to say, that the editor was wrong in inserting the letter as an advertisement; it should have appeared as other letters do, and for this reason I was entitled to have my money returned, which they had held for a year and

seven months, the amount of £4 14s. handed to me, for which I gave a receipt ; and from that time to the present *The Times* has occasionally given me a lift with my young clients.

"THE STORY OF AN ACCIDENT.

"TO THE EDITOR OF THE 'LONDON FIGARO.'

"SIR,—‘Mind them bricks on them there floors,’ were the words used by one of the men at the scene of a recent terrible accident at Coalville, in Leicestershire, and which were addressed to some of the people who were humanely hurrying by the nearest way to remove the dead, and render assistance to the dying, as they lay in shattered and bleeding heaps upon the floors of the brick-yard. To my mind this unfeeling order plainly proves how mischievous are the effects of a want of education, combined with a constant familiarity with cruelty and the enforcement of a species of infantile slavery. A brick-yard workman becomes callous to every feeling of humanity, and learns to care more for the bricks in the yard than for the poor children who made them, and some of whom, on that bright summer afternoon, were offered up a sacrifice to the Moloch of a cruel economy.

"What I wish to lay before your readers is this, that, having a few months ago drawn your attention to a fatal accident which happened to a brick-yard child in this very neighbourhood, I have again to inform you of another accident which occurred at the same place, and by which three poor children have been sacrificed. Two others, the doctors say, will never get better, whilst several more are seriously injured. One of those killed was a lad, a few months over nine years of age, who had been working in the brick-yard about two years. If the plan I have suggested from time to time had been acted upon, and all the brick and tile-yards brought under Government inspection, irrespective of numbers, this accident would not have happened. What further proof is needed to show that something should be done by Government to protect these poor children ? It is fearful to think upon the thousands that have been brought to a premature grave, and of the thousands that are, at the present time, undergoing the same cruel treatment, engendered by the present system. The statement made by the Home Secretary a few days ago, that the re-arrangement of the

Factory and Workshops Act would have his attention early next session, will give joy to those who have at heart the welfare of the brick-yard children ; and I trust that brick-yards may not be overlooked by him in the next extension of the Workshops Act.

“I am, yours truly,

“GEORGE SMITH.

“Spring Cottage, Coalville, near Leicester.”

Such then is the case of the children of the brickyards put in my humble, homely, unskilful way, yet resting throughout on matters-of-fact, every detail of which can be verified by any reader who will visit even hurriedly a few of our brick-yards, and go among the brick-workers. O ! for the pen and for the power of the writer of “The Casual,” that coming forth from days and nights among the children, and hearing their many-toned “cry,” I might reach the universal heart and conscience of England !

Now for

The Remedy.

In order to bring this out, I shall re-produce correspondence carried on for several past years—selecting such letters as contain my suggestions, and as canvass those made by others. Of necessity, I have anticipated a good deal in the previous part of my book : but repetition in such matters is absolutely demanded, seeing that only iteration and reiteration succeed. My first letter to the Press was as follows, on July 26th, 1868. Previous to this I had contented myself (perhaps mistakenly) with private communications to influential and philanthropic individuals. More especially from 1864 onward, I had very frequently written to the Secretary of State for the Home Department and the “Inspectors” of the Government : and I have received only the utmost courtesy from all officials with whom I have been brought into contact, not to say conflict.

“TO THE EDITOR OF ‘THE STAR.’

“SIR,—Having had the management of extensive colliery works for many years, I can testify to the truth of the statement made by Mr. Mundella, M.P., in the House of Commons last week, in the debate on the Trades’ Union Bill, that ‘there was no trade in which ignorance, vice, and immorality prevailed to a greater extent than amongst the *employés* in brick and tile-yards.’ What is the reason? The answer will be found in the fact that children of both sexes are put to work at the most tender age, sometimes as early as six, and employed on an average fourteen and fifteen hours a day (in addition to several hours on the Sabbath), nearly naked, without any kind of supervision or separation of the sexes. Can it then be wondered at that ‘ignorance, vice, and immorality prevail’ to a greater extent in this than any other trade?

“The custom prevails in many districts where children are allowed to run wild in the streets until strong enough to carry a lump of clay or a couple of bricks, and then are packed off to the yards to undergo excessive toil, and were it not for the counteracting agency of Sabbath-schools, left to grow up in the grossest ignorance. If agricultural gangs and other trades are brought under the Factory Act, why not brick-yards, irrespective of the number employed in them? Manufacturers who employ fifty hands are under its restrictions, whilst those who employ less escape, thereby giving them an advantage over the larger firms, at the expense of the morals of the employed. What I contend for is the application of the Act to all yards, regardless of the number of hands employed on the ground—that what is good for fifty children must be beneficial to twenty or a less number.

“In the interest of the young children employed, I would appeal to the masters whose yards do not come under the Act to bring about a better state of things by voluntarily submitting them to its provisions, and thus wipe away, as soon as possible, the stigma now attached to the trade. If this be not responded to, then I ask that the Act be modified so as to bring within its beneficent protection the rising generation of the poor.

“Yours truly,
“GEORGE SMITH.”

Another letter was as follows :—

“TO THE EDITOR OF THE ‘DAILY NEWS.’

“SIR,—On visiting some of the potteries in Derbyshire a few days ago I was surprised to find so few children working upon half-time. On inquiry, I find this arises from two causes. First, the masters do not care to become responsible for the education of the children who work half-time only, as is the case now, and therefore they do not employ them under 13 years old. Secondly, the parents are careless about sending them, stating, ‘That it is more trouble than it is worth for a child to be upon half-time.’ If a child were working the whole of his time he would probably earn three or three shillings and sixpence per week. That amount, when it comes to be divided between the two children who thus share the day between them, leaves but little for the parents after paying for their schooling and the extra clothes they require, and the consequence is that many of the children are sent about the streets and lanes at the expense of their education, and thereby one of the principal objects of the Factory Act is frustrated. Hoping something will be done to counteract this,

“I am, &c.,

“GEORGE SMITH.

“Coalville, near Leicester, Sept. 6, 1869.”

Two additional letters carried on the agitation, and being copied extensively, led to considerable thought and large correspondence. They must be here given :—

“TO THE EDITOR OF THE ‘BIRMINGHAM DAILY POST.’

“SIR,—The following question has very frequently been put to me, and it is one that demands the immediate, earnest, and serious attention of every one who has the welfare of our rising generation at heart—‘Ought children employed in our brick-yards to be under the Factory Act or not?’ I shall not take up much of your valuable space by arguing the case. The amount of toil, hardship, and exposure the children have to endure is well known to almost every one; and this alone ought to be sufficient answer to the question.

"The principal objection to the children being brought under the Factory Act is raised by those masters who have not sheds in which the children can work during wet weather. In answer to this, I cannot do better than refer to my own experience, which is of thirty years' standing. Twenty years of that time I have had a great number of children under my supervision, and have never yet found that anything has been gained by employing them longer than ten hours per day, whether there be sheds or not. In most of the yards that I have visited, the custom is to make bricks in fine weather, and to set and draw the kilns, load up the bricks, and perform other work during wet weather; and, consequently, the children do not get the amount of rest that some people might imagine.

"I will now briefly submit a few reasons why all the children employed in brick and tile-yards should be brought under the Act:—1st. It will only be dealing with fairness to those masters who employ fifty hands and upwards, and are thereby under it, for all yards, irrespective of the numbers, to be under the Act. The excessive toil and fatigue the children have to suffer is another reason. I will mention a case that came under my own observation, only a few weeks ago. One child, out of many others similar in size and age, and doing the same amount and kind of work, I had the curiosity to have weighed, and found that he was barely nine years old, and that he weighed only 53 lbs. Well, this little creature was engaged in carrying, on an average, 44 lbs. weight of clay on his head for a distance of fourteen miles per day, and working seventy-two hours per week.

"The ignorance, vice, and immorality that prevail amongst persons employed in brick-yards is another reason why something should be done to better their condition. I have one family in my mind, out of many others, where there are eight children, and none of them can either read or write. Two of them are under eleven years of age, and are working in brick-yards. And this happens in a neighbourhood where there are two excellent day-schools, and the children could have received a good education for one penny per week. The parents and elder branches of the family are earning good wages. This is another argument in favour of compelling the children to produce a certificate of

having attended school for at least three years before commencing work—say between seven and twelve years of age ; and I would further add that the children should not be allowed to commence work upon any consideration under twelve years of age.

“I am strongly opposed to girls being employed in brick-yards, on any account, as being contrary to all sense of decency. This demands the attention of the Government in the next extension of the Factory Act. Girls are forbidden to work at collieries, and most certainly they ought also to be forbidden at brick-yards, the work being totally unfit for them. If potters, printers, bookbinders, agricultural gangs, iron and tin workers, and others are brought under the Act, I say that all children employed in the brick and tile-yards ought to share in those benefits which would elevate themselves, their families, and their country, morally, socially, and intellectually.

“Yours very truly,

“GEORGE SMITH.

“Coalville, Leicester, October 20, 1869.”

“TO THE EDITOR OF THE ‘LEICESTER CHRONICLE AND MERCURY.’

“SIR,—I shall be glad if you will allow me, as a practical man, and as one who has had much experience in the management of working children, a further portion of your valuable space, while I make an observation or two in way of reply to the papers read at Manchester last week by Col. Ackroyd, M.P., and A. Redgrave, Esq., one of Her Majesty’s Inspectors of Factories, relative to the half-time system.

“That system may suit some trades where the work is light and dry, but where the work is of such a laborious kind as at brick and tile-yards, iron-works, &c., children ought not to be allowed to commence work at a tender age, the evils of which were shown in my letter to the *Birmingham Post* of the 25th ult.

“The plan I have long and persistently advocated (and not without effect), is that children shall not be employed, under any circumstances, before they attain the age of twelve years ; and not then unless a certificate be produced that

they had regularly attended a day-school at least three years prior to that age. This plan, I know from experience in the brick-yards under my control, will suit the masters and the children's parents, and be of greater ultimate benefit to all concerned, than the half-time principle. I may state that to my knowledge there is not a pottery in Derbyshire employing children under twelve years of age.

"I am unaware of one brick and tile-yard in England that is under the salutary provisions of the Factory Act, owing to the proprietors employing the children upon the half-time system. Why they adopt this plan has been fully stated by me in a letter which recently appeared in a daily contemporary, the gist of which 'Why,' is that the masters do not care to become responsible for the education of the children employed by them, whilst on the other hand, the parents do not care to send them to school because of the little money the children take home as the result of their premature toil.

"One of the factories under my management is not under the Act, owing to its being situated in another parish, and not employing the requisite number of hands; but I have notwithstanding, placed the *employés* under its restrictions and regulations, and find that it answers well for all parties—masters, children, and parents.

"One remarkable omission has been made by all the speakers at the great meetings held on the subject, which is the non-reference to the employment of girls and young children at brick-yards, the evils, moral and physical, springing therefrom requiring a prompt and thorough eradication.

"Yours, &c.,

"GEORGE SMITH.

"Spring Cottage, Coalville, Nov. 6, 1869."

In my advertisement letter to the *Times* I had—as invariably—pleaded for Government inspection. This drew down upon me, in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the rebuke of a "Sub-Inspector of Factories." The editor thus summarized his communication :—

"A 'Sub-Inspector of Factories' writes to us to say that if Mr. George Smith, to whose letter in *The Times* about

children employed in brick and tile-yards we drew attention the other day, would only get the parish vestries in his own neighbourhood and elsewhere to carry out the existing law in the Workshops Act, 1867, specially applicable to such cases as those detailed by him, we should hear no more of the employment of any child in the kingdom under the age of thirteen years for more than six and a half hours for any day in the week. It is declared by the statute 30 and 31 Vic., cap. 46, better known as the Workshops Act, 1867, that no child under eight years of age can be employed in any handicraft at all, and no child under thirteen years of age can be employed for more than six and a half hours on any one day, such employment to take place between the hours of six in the morning and eight at night. The Act itself declares it to be the duty of the local authority, &c., in every district, or, in the absence of any such body, of the parish vestry, to enforce the provisions of the statute, which was passed expressly to prevent the over-working of women and children in places not under the supervision of the Factory Inspectors. Notwithstanding the publicity given to this enactment, under the express orders of the Home Secretary, country gentlemen, magistrates, clergymen, and others who should be members of a vestry in their respective districts, and whose 'duty' it is to take care that poor children are not overworked in contravention of the Act under their own daily observation, appear to consider that some extraneous authority must be set in motion to carry out the plain duty that devolves upon them. If only three or four persons in a district where any long or arduous working of children is in practice would at once call a vestry, and appoint some one in each parish to see that the Workshops Act, 1867, even so far only as respects the daily work, is enforced, the evils detailed in Mr. Smith's letter could not continue to exist for a single week in any brick-yard in the United Kingdom."

To this I replied thus in the *Pall Mall Gazette*:—

"CHILDREN IN BRICK-YARDS.

"On the question of the children employed in brick-yards Mr. George Smith, to whose advertisement in *The Times* we lately called attention, writes as follows:—'Will you be

kind enough to allow me a small portion of your valuable space while I reply to your correspondent "A Sub-Inspector of Factories," who seems desirous of calling my attention to that abortive measure the 'Workshops Act,' abortive at least in so far as it is being worked in the brick and tile-yards of this country at the present time. And I beg to ask him in the first place, How is it that so few of the local authorities have put the Workshops Act in force, the Act having been passed two years? Secondly, How is it that two yards adjoining each other in the same field, and doing the same kind of work, are so differently dealt with as that the one in which there are fifty hands or upwards is placed under the Factory Act, while the other, in which there are forty-nine, or a less number of hands employed, is placed under the Workshops Act. If it can be proved that the local authorities look well after the yard in which there are forty-nine or a less number of hands employed, how should not they look after the yard in which there are fifty employed? Or, on the other hand, should not the Inspectors who look after the yards in which there are fifty hands employed, look after the other in which there are forty-nine or a less number? This is what I cannot understand; if the Factory Act is good for fifty it must be good for twenty or a less number. Thirdly, How is that when one employer employs 125 hands, eighty in one parish and forty-five in an adjoining parish, all doing the same kind of work, the one yard, in which there are eighty employed is under Government Inspectors, while the other yard, in which there are forty-five employed is free, in consequence of it not being in the same parish, to work the children without any restrictions, unless the local authorities take the matter up? Does not this seem strange too? Admitting, as your correspondent does, that the Workshops Act has not answered the purpose for which it was intended, I would ask him whether it does not appear that the only way of getting out of the difficulty is for the Government to take the matter up, and inspect all yards, irrespective of the number employed, and on the plan suggested by me."

I would now place alongside of these letters, one—a remarkable and weighty one—addressed to me by Alexander Redgrave, Esq., C.B., one of Her Majesty's principal Inspectors, in association with Robert Baker, Esq.

“ Factory Inspector’s Office,

“ 10, Whitehall, London, S.W.,

“ 29th Nov., 1860.

“ Sir,—I have read with very great interest the letter which appeared in *The Times* of this morning.

“ Of course, you are aware that by the two Acts passed in 1867, brick-fields, &c., are placed under restrictions. Those in which 50 and more persons are employed, are under the Factory Act; those in which fewer than 50 persons are employed, being under the Workshops Act.

“ By these Acts, children must attend school, and are restricted in their hours of labour.

“ There are doubtless, at first sight, some difficulties in carrying out those principles in brick-fields, &c.; but they are not insuperable. I can refer to a large district of brick-makers in Kent, where the children are attending school, and where the factory hours are worked.

“ Representations have been made to me by brickmakers that the factory regulations would present some difficulties in the summer months; but they are all of opinion that the half-time system can be carried out.

“ I have been considering very anxiously the question of the employment of children in brick-fields; and I should agree with you in principle that no child should be employed until 12 years of age; and not then, unless provided with a certificate of having attended school.

“ In my last letter, I advocated this principle as applicable to all employments; but looking to the state of things as now existing, I would prefer a gradual introduction of your principle, and a continuance of the present system of school attendance which is now being carried out in the brick-fields in several parts of my district.

“ The principal object of my troubling you with this, is to inquire whether your letter is intended to present a remedy for the educational deficiencies of children employed in brick-fields, or whether the whole question is comprised in it, and you do not intend to restrict *the duration of labour*?

“ In all the large brick and tile-works in my district, *i.e.*, in works in which fifty or more persons are employed, I believe the factory hours have been fairly observed, and that the children have attended school; while in the smaller

works, under the Workshops Act, and consequently under the jurisdiction of the local authorities, the law has been observed in many places ; and where it has not been observed, it has been through the neglect of the local authorities.

“Yours truly,

“George Smith, Esq.”

“ALEX. REDGRAVE.

My answer follows :—

**“THE CHILDREN EMPLOYED AT BRICK AND
TILE-YARDS.**

“Dear Sir,—In reply to yours of the 29th inst., I am pleased to find that you read my letter, which appeared in the *Times* of the above date, with so much interest.

“I am well aware of all brick-yards in which there are fifty or more hands employed, being under the Factory Act, while those yards on which there are less than fifty employed, are under the Workshops Act. This, in my estimation, is no better than a dead letter, seeing the way it is at present carried out, so far as the brick and tile-yards are concerned. This is the mystery to me, and what I cannot understand, that those employing fifty hands, or upwards, should be under Government inspection, while those employing forty-nine, or a less number, are put under local supervision, which, through the number of obstacles that are in the way, is practically inoperative and useless ; and to attempt to carry out the half-time system in brickyards, collieries, and iron-works, is absurd. So that, with the Government not having in its power to enforce the Factory Act, through there not being fifty hands employed, and the local authorities being careless and indifferent about the matter—between the two authorities, the Local and the Government—the most ignorant, uneducated, down-trodden, and poorest children in England, are being worked to death.

“Having been connected with some of the largest yards in England, for nearly thirty years, I may say that I have seen as much, if not more, than any other man, of the wants, sufferings, and requirements of the poor children.

“You are quite correct in saying that difficulties appear at first, in carrying out the Workshops Act, and the half-

time system ; and that this state of things will continue, if it is attempted to be carried out on the present plan, is my firm conviction. The fact is, that neither the parents, children, nor masters, like the system ; the reasons of which have been stated by me, in several of the daily and other papers.

“You refer to the brick-yards in Kent, as working well upon the half-time plan. This is the reverse of what I have understood, having been given to understand, upon good authority, that not 5 per cent. of the brickmakers in Kent act, at the present time, upon the half-time system, and the generality of those who are under it do not like the plan ; but I am more especially referring to those brick and tile-yards in the counties East, West, and North of England, amongst which are some of the largest yards in the world.

“With reference to your inquiry about the intentions of my letters, and the objects I have in view ; viz., Whether it is the education of the children or the hours of labour, I am wishful to see amended ? In answer to this, I may say that it is to these two objects I am anxious to direct attention ; for any system will be ineffectual which does not aim at them both. Having been engaged during the last five years in trying to better the condition of the children employed on the brick-yards, in trying to induce the public to take the matter up, I may further add, that I have had interviews with R. Baker, Esq., C.B., Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Factories, a great number of times on the subject in both points.

“What I am anxious for, and have been desiring from the first, is to have all brick-yards under Government inspection ; and that on the plan sketched out by me, and not under the Workshops Act, as it is at present in operation, which is a complete failure ; from this fact, that the local authorities will not meddle with their neighbours’ children, through which cause, many times, unpleasantness will occur. They think, and rightly too, it is a matter for the Government to take up, and not them.

“What I am anxious to see brought about, is a better state of things in the brick-yards, with reference to the children’s health, education, and character ; and this can only be done in four ways :—1. Educate the children before going to work ; 2. Do not allow them to commence working

before twelve years of age ; 3. Limit the hours of labour while at work ; 4. Do not allow girls to be employed at brick and tile-yards, the work being totally unfit for them.

“My plan is as follows :—Not to allow children to commence working under twelve years of age, on any account, and then require them to produce a certificate of having been at school for at least three years ; and to appoint sub-inspectors over certain districts who know something of the usages of the trade, and who have the welfare of the children at heart ; which plan I am pleased to see you agree with in the main ;—and I would further add, that it is by far the simpler plan, and the only one that will call forth the hearty co-operation of all concerned. This is my thorough conviction.

“Any information that is in my power, I will gladly give you, and be pleased to meet you at any time or place, to confer with you on the subject.

“I am, sir, yours very truly,

“GEORGE SMITH.

“A. Redgrave, Esq.,

“H.M. Inspector of Factories.”

“Factory Inspector’s Office, 10, Whitehall,

“London, S.W., 9th Dec., 1869.

“Dear Sir,—I feel quite ashamed to have given you so much trouble in explaining your views upon the subject of the employment of children in brick-fields, but it is most gratifying to me to find that our opinions on this matter nearly coincide. We both desire to prevent the employment of children of tender years, and to secure them some amount of education. I am not at all inclined to differ with you on the age at which children should first be permitted to be employed, but I do not feel quite authorised to appoint the age you have fixed upon for brick-fields, only as I think there are other employments at which the children begin work much too young, and it is very desirable that this should be our guiding principle in these questions. Neither am I inclined to despair of the half-time system in connection with brick-fields. It is in operation in many fields in my district, and I have not found that there are any insuperable

objections. I hope shortly to submit to the Government a proposition which will provide for the due enforcement of all regulations whether under the Factory or Workshops Acts.

“Yours truly,

“G. Smith, Esq.”

“ALEX. REDGRAVE.

To this I once more replied as follows :—

Coalville, Dec. 16, 1869.

“Dear Sir,—I am in receipt of your favour of the 9th inst., and, in reply, beg to say that, having seen so much immorality prevailing at brick and tile-yards, and the cruelty and hardship the children working at these places have to suffer, I do not look upon it as a trouble, but a duty incumbent upon me to furnish you with any suggestions or information in my power, if by so doing I can assist you in bettering their condition. Your letter refers to one or two points which, through the length of my last letter to you, I omitted, viz., the employment of children in other trades or works. It has long been my conviction, and it is a subject that I have often talked over with Mr. Baker, that all labouring children ought to be classified, or put under one of two heads, by either the Factory Act or an Amended Workshops Act. In either case I would vest the compulsory powers in the hands of the Government. If the work is light and dry, as I have previously stated, it is mainly the many hours that the children work daily that requires some legal restriction, and the half-time system is easy of application to this kind of work. I would place such under the Factory Act; but trades or employment in which the children have to undergo severe toil and exposure to the weather, I would place under the Amended Workshops Act, and adapt the hours of labour according to the peculiarities of the trade. For instance, if it were desirable to fix the age at which children employed in agriculture should commence working, at ten years of age, this might be allowed; at the same time it is a question with me whether they ought to begin work before they are twelve years of age, and so with brick and tile-yards, where they make plain and ornamental tiles, collieries, iron-works, mining operations, and every other kind of work

which could not well be brought under the Factory Act.

You will, therefore, see that I would place the light and fancy kinds of work under the Factory Act, and the heavier and dirtier kinds of work under the Workshops Act. The age at which children should commence working at the latter kind of work should most certainly not be under twelve, and the hours of labour restricted for several years; also it should be imperative for them to produce a certificate of having attended a day-school the length of time stated by me in my last letter. By this plan almost every working child in England could be brought under Government inspection. When this is done one great and important step will then have been taken in producing a better state of things than at present exists, with reference to the miserable-looking children we often see, between seven and eight o'clock at night, wending their way home from the brick-yards outside our town, in an almost exhausted state, to the most wretched-looking places in our back streets and alleys, so far as health, education, and character are concerned.—I am, dear Sir, yours very truly,

“GEORGE SMITH.

“A. Redgrave, Esq., H. M. Inspector.”

The foregoing correspondence was extensively copied by the provincial press, particularly by those newspapers circulated within the area of the brick and tile counties. Mr. Redgrave honoured me with repeated subsequent letters, and I have invariably found him, as well as Mr. Baker, warmly seconding every effort to ameliorate the condition of the children.

Further, I reprint my report on brick-yards, as it appeared in the Blue-book as part of the report of Robert Baker, Esq., C.B.

“I will close my present observations on work-shops with Mr. Smith's report on brick-yards, for Mr. Smith is practically acquainted with the work, and his observations are valuable :—

"Coalville, near Leicester.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"Aug. 17th, 1869.

"Ought children employed in brick-yards to be under the Factory Act or no? This is a question that I have often been asked, and in endeavouring to answer it, I may state that I have after 30 years' practical experience and observation with brick and tile-yards, arrived at certain definite conclusions. During a greater portion of that time I have had the management of extensive works and the oversight of many others, so that I am in a position to form an opinion as to what age children ought to commence working and the hours during which they should be employed.

"I propose in the first place to deal with one or two of the principal objections the masters raise against the yards coming under the Act. They say (I mean those masters who have no sheds on the ground), 'If we cannot work 15 or 16 hours per day when the weather is fine, when can we work?' My reply is this, that if a child be treated properly, such child is capable of doing as much work in 10 hours as another who is kept working day after day for 16 hours. This I know to be true, for I have tried it.

"Any reasonable person must know that it is impossible for a child to be running about for so many hours for one day, carrying 18 or 20 pounds weight in his or her arms, and afterwards be able to do the same amount of work next day. I have seen this system attempted to be carried out, but it has been by kicks and blows, and then what have the children been fit for the following day? In many cases they run away, 'and won't have it,' and you will either find them at the railway stations trying to pick up a casual penny by crying out to passers-by, 'Carry your parcel, please,' from which class we have a large proportion of our vagabonds, thieves, and never-do-wells.

"When a child knows that he will cease labour at six o'clock in the evening, he works cheerfully, briskly, and with greater ease, consequently getting through more work than the child who has to work from five o'clock in the morning until eight or nine o'clock at night, and in many cases all night at the kilns. The latter goes doggedly along and seems to have neither life nor soul within him; and instead of looking forward to an hour's pleasure at the end of his day's work, he is wishing for the hour of dusk to arrive, so that he may go home to bed. I therefore assert as a fact, and I think the foregoing statements will bear me out, that a master is no gainer by employing children more than 10 hours per day, whether they be employed in sheds or not.

"Nine-tenths of the children employed where there are no sheds do not go home on wet days, as some people are led to believe, but on the contrary, either have the kilns to set or draw, have holes to clean out, load up bricks, &c., &c., or do other work which is kept in reserve for such days.

"Another objection the masters raise is that they would be required, if their hands were brought under the Act, to keep a set of books, and thus cause them considerable trouble and expense.

I must confess there is some little force in this objection, when it is taken into consideration that many of the masters have been themselves brickmakers, and who, having been sent early to work, had not the advantage of attending a day-school, and therefore cannot either read or write. If this objection could be met, or some simpler plan suggested, very little opposition would or could be offered. And I would suggest that books until 'the good time coming,' be dispensed with. Further I would allow no 'half-timers,' and therefore, instead of 13 years of age as at present, I would substitute 12 at which a child would commence work, and make it compulsory to bring a surgeon's certificate, as is the case under the present Act, before commencing work.

"And I would further make it compulsory for the child or its parents to produce a certificate from a schoolmaster stating that the child had been at school for at least three years between the age of 7 and 12, before commencing.

"I am strongly opposed to girls being employed in brick-yards under any circumstances, as being contrary to all sense of decency, the work being totally unfit for them. If it be necessary they should be employed in yards situated in the neighbourhood of collieries where there is a scarcity of boys, they should be employed only on the following conditions, viz., that they should be employed in the sheds by themselves, and not be allowed to commence before 6 a.m., or continue after 6 p.m.; that girls shall not be permitted to assist in carrying clay on their heads, as much as forty or fifty pounds' weight at a time, or carrying bricks up ladders to the top of the kilns as is now the practice; that the masters shall provide suitable clothing if girls are allowed to be employed.

"Should the brick-yards ever be brought under the Factory Act, and Sub-Inspectors appointed who know something of the trade usages and neighbourhood, I do not think that one master in fifty will offer any objection to it, having made it my business of late to make all the inquiries I could on the subject.

"The masters themselves know that the mode in which brick-yards are worked is radically wrong, but I am sorry to say they have not the moral courage to make a stand against a system which is demoralising its thousands annually. Their object seems to be to wring the uttermost farthing out of the children at the expense of their health and morals. Whenever I see such cruelty practised, I am reminded of the Egyptian taskmasters of old, and hope the day is not far distant when the Government will put forth its beneficent hand to rescue them from such a debasing system.

"I beg, &c., GEORGE SMITH."

These various documents have, I believe, adequately stated the details at once of the evils of child-labour and the remedy sought. But I venture to put them in a few brief numbered paragraphs:—

1. I seek absolutely to prohibit infant and child labour in brick-yards (as everywhere), such has as been super-abundantly proved to exist extensively, whereby the merest dots of "little ones," from 3 and 4 to 7 and 8 upwards, are "broken in" and kept to labour.

2. I seek absolutely to prohibit the employment of girls and women in the work of brick-yards.

3. I seek to have it enacted that no one shall be permitted to work in brick-yards sooner than the twelfth birthday, and then only when certified to be able to "read, write, and cipher."

4. I seek to lessen the hours of labour to a *maximum* of from 8 to 10 hours, and from 12 years to 14, or thereby to permit only alternate days' working—the latter preferable to half-time, which has practical though not insurmountable difficulties.

5. I seek to have official supervision of the health and treatment of all juveniles in brick-yards, and punishment to be felt by breakers of the law.

6. I seek to place all brick-yards, tileries, and the like under an amalgamation of the Factories Act and the Workshops Act—including all employing under as well as over 50 hands.

7. I seek to have Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors who know the usages of the brick-yards, &c., and the inspection to be universal. At present not more than 100 brick-yards out of 2,825 are thus inspected.

With these several things carried out in integrity, "good fruits" would very soon appear; and I feel sure that employers would discover that hitherto they have been standing in their own light by opposing such "inspection," while your high-handed and slippery evaders of every claim of humanity, whose sole objects are to make merchandise of the body and soul in order to gain, would become a blessed impossibility, and, persisting, find the law stronger than they.

For six years now, the works over which I am still placed, have been under the "inspection" of the Factory Act ; and IN NO RESPECT has my employer been a loser ; while it does one good to observe the light of hope, the sobriety, decency, economy, and deeper still, Christian character resulting. As a mere thing of profit and loss, I can get more out of a lad in 10 hours than I can from him during 14 to 16.

But in truth, I am constantly reminded of the piecemeal and fragmentary character of our legislation. How in the name of all that's sensible should child-labour be protected in half-a-dozen departments with the utmost stringency and severity, and yet child-labour be allowed, such as this of brick-yards employing less than 50, and even in more extensive brick-yards, through notorious evasions and concealments ? Why should it not be a fundamental statute that in this our England no work should by any possibility be exacted from such child-workers as we have found in the brick-yards ? Why should it not be an equally fundamental statute that in this our England, no child under 12 or at 12 and upwards, should be allowed to go to any work until it has been educated up to the three renowned R's of the civic knight ? Why, further, should it not be a fundamental statute that nowhere and in no employment whatever shall it be possible to exact 14 or 16 hours' work from children ? And above all and as consecrating all, why should the many Churches of our land hang back from grappling with the enormities of evil-training, evil-action, evil-speaking, impurity, that abound among the children and youths (and adults) of the brick-yards and kindred works ? I believe in my inmost soul that Christ's Gospel is omnipotent to drain out the foulest "slough," to cleanse and clarify the most pestilential moral atmosphere, to lift up and keep high the most sunken, lost and misled lives, to verily "save" everlastingly, the "very chief of sinners ;" and I cannot for the life of me understand how it should be permitted by Church or nonconformist, that

outside of every House of God, there should be left teeming thousands. My heart has been saddened by the ever-retained "No" given me when I have asked in the brick-yard, whether "the parson" had ever visited them or spoken to them.

I have written this book in order to catch the ear and conscience of my fellow-countrymen and countrywomen, on behalf of the children of the brick-yards. I yearn to get them placed beneath the benignant ægis of LAW, and I do so because I feel intensely the ignorance and suffering, the degradation and bondage, being endured by the little workers. This is a present need. But I look onward. I think of these children as the men and women, as the wives and husbands, as the fathers and mothers of generations to come, and I want the future to be nobler and better than the past. As things now are, the brick-yard workers have not one touch of ambition to rise above their present low level; as things now are, they are content to pig it in the most wretched hovels and under the most abject conditions, with the workhouse closing the vista; as things now are, they drudge and exist, and live on and on in a mere animalism, and without thought of aspiration. As a suggestive matter-of-fact, the very naming of the streets and houses (or hovels) and districts they occupy, betrays the corruption and viciousness of their ordinary thoughts and feelings. There are names daily used that might be the offspring of Hell. Again, as a correspondingly suggestive matter-of-fact, while every other department of human work, down to the stolid day labourer in the field—for JOHN CLARE was such an one—has furnished its quota of thinkers, singers, inventors, discoverers, professors—it is one in two thousand times you ever hear of one from the brick-yards rising. And yet you meet with shrewd if narrow, powerful if unregulated, penetrative if impulsive intellects, and natures almost softly emotional. I will not recur to the females; but I have little hope of purity among them in so far as brick-yards are

concerned, until they are absolutely prohibited from working such work, nor under the moral reformation certain to accrue from such legislation as I have proposed, with the Christianhood of England seeing to its duty, would the wives and mothers of the brick-yard workers need to leave their own firesides. Leastwise they would be free to "abide" there, and fill their family homes with sunshine.

But I must now bring this part of my book to a close. I would do so by inviting the most thorough sifting of all I have submitted. I believe that a "good time" is "coming" for the children. I believe that the

Cry of the Children

will be heard below as already above: and I appeal to every one who has the welfare of our beloved native land at heart to unite in one "long pull, strong pull, and pull altogether," to secure the immediate interposition of the legislature for the protection of these "little ones."

"The sore complaint late and early
Did we listen, we might hear
Close beside us,—but the thunder
Of a city dulls our ear:
Every heart, as God's bright angel,
Can bid one such sorrow ease."

Fathers and mothers in the happy homes of "merry England," look in the radiant faces of the children the great Father has sent into your homes: and spare a thought, spare a helping hand and a praying heart for the children of the brick-yards.

A PICTURE.

Drawn from personal observations and Mr. G. Smith's letters.

I saw a little brick-yard boy
With body almost bare,
What clothes he had were thin and torn,
And matted was his hair;
And such a little boy was he,
In years, not more than three times three.

The Cry of the Children from

And yet for very little pay
He'd work so hard the live long day :
From six at morn, till seven or eight,
His legs had tumbled 'neath the weight
Of forty pounds of clay or more,—
And ah, poor lad! his feet were sore.

No wonder, either, for those feet
A many miles had run,
With hurried speed across the floors,
Beneath a burning sun ;
No wonder at his silent tears,
His master's oaths rung in his ears.

And he could neither read nor write,
Nor tell his A B C ;
And he but little knew of God,
Who made the earth and sea ;
Poor little slave on British soil,
So young in years, why dost thou toil ?

Methinks that thou should'st go to school,
Till thou art stronger grown,
And learn to read, and count, and write,
Before thou leav'st thy home,
To labour here so hard and long ;
Ah ! stay poor child, till thou art strong.

I wish I could, but father drinks,
And beats poor mother so,
And then he swears at me and says
That I to work shall go.
I wish sometimes that I were dead,
Only poor mother has no bread.

Poor child, said I, and turned my head,
To hide the starting tears,
God send a friend that will protect
Thy young and tender years,
And thousands more as young as thee,
From drink's dead curse and slavery.

W.



CHILDREN "COUNTING THEIR WAGES" FOR "RUNNING BRICES OFF."

Part II.

Storming the Citadel—Foes Encountered— With Plan of Attack.

Having mentioned the exceptional rudeness and insolence of a certain Mr. Brick and Tile Manufacturer, and the foolish and drolly pompous controversial correspondence with which he flooded the district, until in public meeting assembled he got a taste of the estimate formed of him by the outside public, I have thought it well to preserve here two letters of such correspondence. I prefer allowing others, rather than my own letters to state the matter ; and so out of the many letters that appeared I give only one of my own. I begin these additional illustrations with a pungent letter from Mr. Carter, as follows :—

“BRICK-YARD EMPLOYÉES.

“TO THE EDITOR OF THE ‘STAFFORDSHIRE SENTINEL.’

“SIR,—I observe in last week’s *Sentinel* a letter signed by a gentleman, a Brickmaker, in relation to this subject, and as I take an interest in the subject of ameliorating the condition of the young claypoles (children I mean), I cannot allow an opportunity to pass without saying a word in favour of them, nor, without protest, allow a letter like Mr. Manufacturer’s to remain uncontradicted. Passing as I do up and down the country, going in and out amongst *employés* of all kinds, especially in brick-yards, and connected as I am with the Press, I come forward in the interest of justice and fair play, first to combat the wrong impression likely to be caused by such a letter ; secondly, to assert the need of brick-yard children having the especial protection of the law ; and

lastly to defend from innuendo and malignant aspersion, a man who in every way takes every means to benefit those who, from his paper read at the late meeting of the Social Science Congress, are crying to reformers and philanthropists to 'Come over and help them.'

"Reading Mr. Manufacturer's letter, the uninitiated might suppose that all was *colour de rose* in our brick-yards, and that instead of their squalor, ignorance, and excessive and inadequately rewarded toil, the *employés* were continually breaking out into songs of thankfulness to munificent masters (like Mr. Manufacturer) and getting up deputations, also expressive of thankfulness for permitting them to work for them at all. This is the burden of his letter. If it be true, then, that no vice, no dreadful toil, no soul-depressing influences are in full play in the brick and tile-yards more than in any other employment, then are false all the evidences of my senses; all false that I have read in newspapers asserting the prevalence of everything that should not be therein; all false the combined testimony of fifty newspapers; all false the evidence of Mr. Mundella, M.P., that 'more vice and immorality prevail in brick-yards than in any other avocation;' all, indeed, false that in one scintilla denies that the brick-yards of this district are paradisiacal institutions for young children, where nothing is wanting but a supply of wings to transform them into cherubs who shall sit up aloft, and from every coign of vantage pipe forth praises of their patron master. Sad, however, am I to assert that the converse is true. I have seen girls and boys half naked at work with the clay, remorselessly hurried to keep pace with the demand of an ogre, who fashions it into bricks, and, like Oliver Twist, asks for *more*. These, instead of staggering under their loads from morn to noon, and from noon to dewy eve, should have been at home or at school. I understand Mr. Brickmaker to defend this. Apart from any other argument, I assert that it is wrong in principle and pernicious in practice to employ children at all under a certain age in brickyards, until they have acquired not only the rudiments of education, which are the birthright of every British child, and physical stamina which shall resist in some degree the influence of their occupation.

"Mr. Brick and Tile Maker is evidently piqued that Mr. George Smith, of Coalville, who was, it appears, once

an *employé* in a brick and tile-yard, should have taken so prominent a place in the advocacy of the claims of such children. So far as regards the disinterested philanthropy of Mr. Smith in this matter, I am in a position to speak ; in season and out of season one finds him to the fore, doing battle for the right. Newspaper articles on every hand endorse his efforts, whilst Government officials refer to his labours in a grateful way. It is therefore not such a letter as Mr. Brickmaker has written to the *Sentinel* that will nullify the efforts of once an *employé*, who, it seems, has by his unaided efforts risen from the soul-crushing influence of the system bolstered up by Mr. Manufacturer, and made for himself a position amongst the workers for social reform that he can never occupy.

“Yours truly,

“A. J. CARTER.”

Next comes my own summing-up of the correspondence, as follows :—

“MR. GEORGE SMITH ON THE BRICK TRADE.

“TO THE EDITOR OF THE ‘STAFFORDSHIRE SENTINEL.’

“SIR,—You kindly inform me that I may occupy half a column of your paper with a final answer to the letters which have appeared on this sorrowful brick-trade matter. I shall not try to exceed the assigned limits, albeit, were the discursive manner of masters and men to be imitated, their column and a half would demand at least the same amount to go through the successive points.

“In a second you can cover a man with dirt that it should take half an hour to remove. But I have no intention, as I have no wish, to re-slay the slain, or to return upon matters-of-fact that have been made good, to the satisfaction of every candid mind, independent altogether of my manner of statement of them.

“I confess that I find Mr. Manufacturer a somewhat slippery gentleman to deal with. For example, I expressed my gratification in the outset of this correspondence that there was an improvement in the condition of things at some works from the time I knew them, and traced such (alleged)

improvement to the application of the *Act*. Thereupon Mr. Brickmaker deliriously shrieks that the *Act* had only been in operation a fortnight or so! By and by the discovery is made or pointed out to him that this was a damaging admission for himself, seeing that if it were so the law must have been evaded at these works. Accordingly, with the proverbial second-thoughts that are best, came an equally bold and blustering declaration that the *Act* had been in force for years and years! I put it to the public, if two statements so absolutely contradictory can be reconciled with the truth? If not, what are we to think of the man that imagines the contradiction won't be detected? In like manner Mr. Brickmaker was hoaxed by somebody who had taken the measure of his gullibility, with a cock-and-bull story of my proposing Mr. Carter, of Leicester, as M.P., thereby explaining Mr. Carter's independent and valuable confirmation of my statements. Shown that here also he was wrong, instead of apologising and withdrawing honourably, he so words his withdrawal as to *libel* me with the insulting *falsehood*—'Mr. Carter, who writes Mr. Smith's letters for him.'*

"Nor is this all his libellous matter. He tells me I have 'made vice the *congenial* study of my life,' insinuating in his cowardly fashion that I have been and am vicious, if not reprobate. There are kindred things that Mr. Manufacturer, if he be so very fond of appeal to the law as to summon its imagined help to his vindication, he will also have to meet and *prove*.

"I tell him that though he would be a great man, while I am a humble one, and only a servant, the law wont permit him or his to cry out of wrong because plain-spoken truths are written of the ongoing in the brick trade, and especially will clearly see that master and men alike, in the very letters wherein they whimper under their castigation, and recount so-called bitter words, address me a hundred fold more opprobriously, and bitterly, and libellously.

"Mr. Brickmaker insists in putting his own construction as the alone-possible one upon my words; and when I, who surely ought to know best, put him right, I am flouted with 'shirk-

* I take the opportunity of stating categorically, that Mr. Carter never wrote one syllable of any one of my letters; but I dare say Mr. Manufacturer has discovered that I can write letters equal to his own, though that isn't saying very much.

ing responsibility,' &c., &c. The transparent device wont do; and if Mr. Brickmaker would take counsel with his judgment rather than his fury, he would see it. I drew my sad statistics from a wide compass. I did not and could not possibly mean that they held of certain brick-yards only; but I did and do mean that from my own experience there and things done there I stood prepared to 'confirm' my statements, applicable to other brick and tile works than those mentioned, in other words these works furnish identically the same class of facts with other brick trade establishments. If Mr. Manufacturer doubts this, I commend to his re-perusal the letters of his own men, with concessions of all I have maintained in *kind* if not in *degree*.

"Again, I will not be deterred by Mr. Brickmaker's bravado and rowdyism of phrase from telling him that it is he, not I, who characterised Mr. Holt's certificate as 'mendacious.' Knowing nothing of Mr. Holt, neither the circumstances under which the examination of the children was conducted, I could not pronounce on either the surgeon or his certificate. But I felt and feel as strongly now, that, as in the slave trade opposition and other enormities, mendacious certificates were procurable by the sheaf; and that in the knowledge of the facts no certificate could possibly be true that so described the class of children I had in view. Such is the simple truth, let Mr. Brickmaker vociferate about 'shirking responsibility,' &c., &c., &c., as he may.

"I rejoice to say that I have received and continue to receive the generous co-operation of employers of labour in the brick trade. Might wont always prevail against right, and Mr. Manufacturer must not delude himself with the notion that he is free to ride rough shod over me or my little clients.

"I take my stand on personal knowledge of the need of the application and enforcement of the Act in relation to the brick-trade juvenile labour and brick-trade immoralities. Elsewhere—viz., in my collected papers and correspondence, I shall deal with the details. The half column you have conceded, it is plain would be utterly inadequate for the purpose.

"Finally, so far as I know my own heart and conscience, it is far from my wish to misrepresent any one or any thing; and for over-strong words I must plead provocation and the divine saying: 'Surely oppression maketh a wise man

mad.' (Ecclesiastes vii., 7.) No slandering of me or mine, and no imbecile threats of law shall abate my efforts to respond to the cry of the children. Mr. Brickmaker will find out that he is playing the part of a celebrated lady with her mop and pail as against the Atlantic Ocean, in seeking at this time of day, legally or otherwise, to suppress the submission to public opinion of notorious and flagrant facts.

"I am, Sir, yours truly,

"GEORGE SMITH.

"Spring Cottage, Coalville, near Leicester."

It would be a sheer waste of pains and space to rouse from oblivion the discreditable letters of Mr. Brick Manufacturer, and those of his workmen. Their *substance* is given in the answers from myself and Mr. Carter, while this brickmaker has sown broadcast over the land his letters, at the same time doing all in his power to hurt me with my employers and others—in vain.

I am reluctant to lose the advantage of the following articles from the public Press: and so add them here. They are of the more value as being based on the *merits*, not from any personal influence of mine, or knowledge of editors, &c.

1. From *The Builders' Weekly Reporter* :—

"MR. GEORGE SMITH AND BRICK-YARD CHILDREN.

"The revelations to be found in the paper recently read by Mr. Smith before the Social Science Congress at Newcastle, are of a character to put humanity to the blush. The condition of boys and girls employed in brick and tile yards, as related by him, is shameful and barbarous. Lads from nine to ten years of age are employed for thirteen hours per day carrying 40 lbs. of clay, and traversing a distance of fourteen miles. Many thus engaged are in a state of half nudity, and are thus exposed at certain seasons

to the injurious effects of wet and cold. From comfortless homes, these infant slaves go to drudge at tasks as hard as those of Egypt's captive Hebrews, urged by the brutal language and often more brutal blows of their unfeeling and exacting taskmasters. In one of his painfully interesting letters, Mr. Smith states :—‘I had a child weighed very recently, and although he was somewhat over eight years of age, he weighed but 52½ lbs., and was employed in carrying 43 lbs. of clay on his head an average distance of fifteen miles daily, and worked 73 hours a week ;’ and this he assures us is only an average case of what thousands of poor children are doing at the present time. What adds to the shameful outrage of such a system, girls of the same age, mingling promiscuously with the boys, are required to do work similar in its kind to that of the other sex ; while physical considerations, not to mention those of decency and morality, render them totally unfit for such drudgery.

“All this being extensively practised throughout the country, while we pride ourselves on our humanity and Christian benevolence. But let our humanity take the form, less of platform extravagances, and more of practical amelioration of the hardships and wrongs of the hapless victims of that cruel system which Mr. Smith so fearlessly exposes. The result of this early and oppressive slavery is that the mind becomes stunted and obtuse, and the sympathies and the moral sense coarse and blunted. Improvidence, drunkenness, and Sabbath desecration are its almost invariable consequences to the men ; and coarseness and illegitimacy, its effects on the women.

“To remedy these crying evils, Mr. Smith has set about with an earnestness of purpose highly creditable to him, at the same time with a success most gratifying and assuring. What Clarkson and Wilberforce by their able and unwearied advocacy did for the slaves of our West Indian plantations, and what Howard, of immortal memory, did for the unhappy denizens of our country's prisons, Mr. Smith is doing for the victims of that cruel economy, that to our national shame obtains so extensively in the brick-yards of our land. It is no mere sentimentality that Mr. Smith deals in, but *facts* that sicken the heart and crimson the cheek with shame: his own bitter experience when a lad in the yards of Staffordshire, but from which, in spite of the crushing and deteriora-

ting tendency of the system, he by dint of praiseworthy economy, application to study, and unconquerable energy, has raised himself to a position of honour and influence, affords but too abundant proof of the shameful wrongs to which the brick-yard children are subjected. Like all others waging war against social iniquities, Mr. Smith has not failed to meet with malignant opposition and bitter abuse. Those specially feeling the force of his sturdy home-thrusts, have sought to falsify his statements; and by malignant aspersions and the implication of sinister motives have endeavoured to predjudice the public against his benevolent aims; but his statements challenge refutation, supported as they are by the sad but forcible logic of carefully sifted facts. The leading journals of the country, both social and religious, have likewise spoken out on this subject, and with words of well-timed cheer, have generously lent their aid in this noble enterprise. But what are the reforms Mr. Smith seeks to bring about? He shall speak for himself: First: The children should have at least three years of education before they go to work. Secondly: They should not be allowed to commence work before they are twelve years of age. Thirdly: The hours of labour should be limited when at work, say from eight to ten hours per day. Fourthly: Girls should not be allowed to work at all in brick and tile-yards, the work being entirely unfit for them. —That there are many who will strongly resist these sweeping and beneficent reforms there cannot be a doubt; The Slave Emancipation and Factory Acts, two of the most righteous Acts that ever passed the British House of Commons, met with bitter and determined resistance. Right and humanity are on the side of Mr. Smith. Nor is the reform he desiderates impracticable in its working; after thirty years of practical experience he asserts, 'without fear of contradiction,' *masters are not gainers* by employing children of such tender years and for so many hours per day. Humane and conscientious proprietors of brick-yards, not under the Factory Act, readily assert their belief that the plan would prove beneficial to all parties concerned, and indeed desire its speedy adoption. The country is becoming acquainted with the wrongs Mr. Smith is seeking to redress; its feelings of shame and indignation find prompt expression through the Press; the Government has its eye on the

revelations brought to light; and from these and other considerations Mr. Smith and the friends of humanity at large, may look forward to a speedy and successful issue of this righteous war."

2. Another letter from Mr. Carter :—

"TO THE EDITOR OF THE 'STAFFORDSHIRE SENTINEL.'

"SIR,—I was under the impression when Mr. Brickmaker so gratuitously took up the challenge of Mr. Smith in the matter of brick-yard labour, that at last a champion had appeared who would vigorously attempt to defend the abuses attacked by Mr. Smith, and by the unsparing application of false logic, the employment of flimsy sophistry, and a plentiful deducing of false conclusions, from equally false premises, make the worse appear the better part to those not cognizant of the sad realities. When he (Mr. Brickmaker)—who is my unwitting fellow labourer in the cause of the children—first entered the lists, and threw down the gauntlet; when he stood like Goliath of Gath, vaunting his prowess, and haughtily and scornfully detailing what he would do with the daring Hebrew youth when he caught him, I for a moment, but for a moment only, doubted the fight. I, however, recalled to mind the result of the famous conflict in the Valley of Elah, and calmly and observantly waited for the end. The combat was soon over; the lance of truth just touched with its point the windbag of Mr. Manufacturer, and it collapsed; his hoarse defiance proved to be 'full of sound and fury, signifying nothing;' his army of facts men of buckram; and as the dust of the fray was swept aside, I looked anxiously for this doughty champion, and found him not. I found, however, in lieu thereof, a shrivelled bladder, a sort of balloon, with all the gas out—in short, the epidermis of a Strasburg tongue. To drop metaphor, however, and that imagery which I am pleased to find my fretful opponent so much admires, I thought when he so bravely (just like *Don Quixote*) sallied forth and announced his intention to bring forward a refutation of Mr. Smith's 'abominable slanders' by the mouths at least of a dozen witnesses, that by some means best known to himself, he would have procured and made public their most impor-

tant evidence. He said he would leave the refutation of Mr. Smith's statements to a dozen of his own workmen. He *has* left it to them, and the result is *nil*, for not one of the dozen men whom Mr. Brickmaker so vauntingly proclaimed to be the equals of Mr. Smith in 'brains, education, rectitude of life and conduct, and in missionary endeavour to benefit their fellow men,' steps into the breach to dispute the heavy indictments of 'vice and immorality' brought against the male and female *employés* in brick-yards. Mr. Brickmaker appealed in vain, and, like the famous chief who called 'spirits from the vasty deep,' was left unanswered, for not one came when they were called. This leaving the work of refutation by this Brickmaker to his men well illustrates the saying that if you want anything done do it yourself; if not, set some one else to do it. The promised refutation has come, as I expected, neither from Mr. Manufacturer nor his men, and therefore the verdict must perforce be entered for the plaintiff.

"A word or two in reference to this man's charge of gross personality brought against Mr. Smith and myself. I leave Mr. Smith to answer for himself as I do for myself. Where, I ask Mr. Brickmaker, does he find in my letter of the 4th instant, that 'gross personality' which I regret to observe is the main characteristic of his attack upon Mr. Smith? I defy him to quote one line of mine that is personal, much more grossly personal. As to my pun on his name it was unintentional if he will believe me, and I am sorry that I used it, especially as Mr. Brickmaker, taking his own words, is so freely pelted therewith in the numerous abusive letters he is in the habit of receiving. Query—Why should he receive so many of such letters? Surely there must be something 'rotten in the state' when a man is abused so persistently and his very name ridiculed. I could understand this if Mr. Manufacturer were a philanthropist, but being only a brickmaker it is to me most inexplicable. I attack a system, not a man. This is no personal question between Mr. Brickmaker, Mr. Smith, and myself, but a question affecting the welfare of thousands of the rising generation, and I am surprised that he should seek to obscure it by whining so much about gross personalities. Is he so thin-skinned and sensitive that a small dose of the same physic should make him cry *peccavi*? He apparently

thinks that he alone has the sole right to be offensive in his remarks, and that he may cast about his abuse alone, and not be called to account. Witness his ungentlemanly reference to Mr. Smith having been employed in his father's yard; his reference to the case of the negro and the disgraceful insinuation built thereon (by the way did the negro confidentially tell Mr. Brickmaker how the cuts were made); observe how he adopts in all its fulness the advice of the lawyer whose instructions to counsel were 'we have no case, pitch into the defendant's attorney.' He inferentially accuses Mr. Smith and myself of an ambition to obtain government inspectorships. I cannot answer for Mr. Smith, whose position in this country is, I believe, well assured, and who might require a stronger inducement than a Brickmaker to accept a governmental post, but as for myself I plead guilty to the soft impeachment, and ingenuously admit that I should like such a post if only for the purpose of enabling me to walk round his plantation and feast my eyes upon the ruddy rosy-cheeked children, who sport and gambol within its boundaries. Mark how he flings his epithets about. He, this fine lackadaisical gentleman, who is so free in his unfounded charges of gross personality, hesitates not, but 'casts back in the teeth;' 'shapes of their pothooks;' 'abominable slanders;' 'foul libels;' 'curse their souls and bodies;' 'their hateful peculiarities;' 'casts back in their faces;' 'reckless characters;' which Mr. Brickmaker, the user, coolly terms 'extremely moderate, civil and polite.' Surely the force of imprudence can no further go; and if the above be a specimen of Mr. Manufacturer's civility and politeness, recommend me to a coalheaver for a gentleman. But I am weary of this bandying of terms—in his and the other brick and tile-yards, thousands are perishing, soul and body, for lack of help. Time enough to adopt the vocabulary of Billingsgate when all the abuses of the system are remedied. Then, when the blessings of education have penetrated the brick-yards of Staffordshire, when half-naked grown-up girls shall have been eliminated therefrom, when this new species of slavery shall have been abolished, and when the profits and emoluments of brick-yards shall be the result of honourable toil of men and lads of proper age—instead of as now, by the forced coolie system of a herd of bare-legged children, of both sexes,

varying from eight to sixteen years, hounded on by unpaternal greed,—then, and then only, will the time have arrived for Mr. Brickmaker to cast about for what *I* will not call ‘venal and mendacious’ certificates, but for evidence (resulting from the enforced regulation of the Act) of the improved bodily and mental stamina of those whose lot it is to delve and patter with their bare feet amongst the clay beds of your and adjoining counties; and when, in earnest truth, it shall be said of them that they are one and all free from the debasing influences that move around them.

“Yours obediently,

“A. J. CARTER.

“Nov. 17, 1870.”

The following is taken from an interesting article in the January part (1871), of *Sunday at Home*:

“WHERE THE BRICKS COME FROM.

“The new station at St. Pancras deservedly commands the admiration of beholders. What skill in design, what cost, what labour have been bestowed on it! One remarks on its vast area, another on its excellent arrangements; as for me, I was specially attracted by the bricks. Fine, shapely, firm, and enduring they are; counted to be the best that the country can furnish.

“But what is there to see in a brick or brick walls? Well, you, good reader, most probably see bricks, and nothing else; I, on the contrary see the fields where they were made, and those who made them. Early—very early in the morning, troops of children of various ages, ragged, thin, shoeless for the most part, hungry-eyed, and in colour like the clay they work in, pass my window on their way to the kilns on the road to Charnwood Forest. They have a listless, don’t-care look, a vacant stare, which tells you that the world is no more to them than they are to the world. All that interests them is the tin can or the bundle they carry containing their dinner, which they eat in the fields under a hedge. There is a great variety of rag-costume among them, which adds to their pathetic, forlorn, yet

picturesque appearance. One little fellow wears, or rather drags after him, a faded soldier's jacket,—a relic of his dead father's work in the wars, perhaps ; much trouble he has to keep possession of it ; his little thin arms would never come out at the end of the sleeves, so he ties them round his neck, and makes a mantle of it. These are the brickmakers—and they made the bricks that built St. Pancras new station.

“Do they look miserable, neglected, mere animated, unbaked bricks ? Really they do (or did—yes, did—but of that presently). Their homes are generally destitute, from the vice and improvidence of their parents : drunken, lazy fathers, and idle gossips (too often drunken too) of mothers, Their wages, earned so hardly, in all weathers when work is possible, are seized on by these, their natural protectors, in harpy fashion, and all they get from them is just as much food as will enable them to fag on. Of course, this is not an exceptionless rule, but it is a rule in a sadly wide sense.

“If the bodily condition of these boys is shown unmistakably in their outward appearance, their spiritual and mental state may be gathered from the fact of their being the whole week all day long in the fields, without any chance of learning the difference between good and evil, either for time or eternity. Many a kind heart has pitied them, doubtless, for long enough ; but pity without relief is a poor affair. ‘An ounce of help is worth pounds of pity,’ the old proverb says ; and ‘the ounce’ came at last, which brings me to my ‘presently.’”

The following is from the *Building News*, of October 14th, 1870—and like the preceding speaks for itself :

“THE SLAVE CHILDREN OF THE MIDLAND COUNTIES.

“‘Wanted, several hundred children, of seven years of age, to carry 5½ tons of clay per day, for sixpence !’ Put into such a sentence, the facts to which we want to draw attention would probably awaken men's minds and consciences. If we suggested the possibility of any child with a black skin being compelled, in Virginia or South Carolina, to employ itself at the age of seven years for thirteen hours

daily in carrying about forty pounds of clay on its head each journey from the clay-heap to the work-table, and in addition thereto, being often obliged to work all night, we have little doubt but that letters from indignant readers would pour in on us. An association with a long name and a liberally-paid staff of officers would be formed to control people over whom we can have no compulsory influence, and to prevent crimes for which we are not responsible. But as it happens to be in England that infants are thus enslaved, we quietly make up our minds to ignore the fact—at any rate to forget it as soon as possible. Yet it is as well some should *know* it. The builder should know it; and the man who has been making money out of bricks and mortar for the last twenty years, and is about to retire on a competence—a large part of which he has indirectly wrung from the hearts of the poor Midland Counties slave-children. The foolish operative bricklayer should know it, who strikes against the introduction of the brick-making machine, and thus does his little best to continue the slavery. That all *may* know it if they will, we give a few facts taken from a paper read at the late Social Science Congress at Newcastle, by Mr. George Smith, of Leicester.

“Personal experience has taught him sympathy for the class in whose behalf he pleads: whether that experience was a pleasant one the following extract from his paper will show:—

‘When a child of about seven years of age, I was employed by a near relative to assist him in making bricks. It is not my wish to say anything against him; but, like most of his class at that time, and like many even now, he thought kicks and blows formed the best means of obtaining the maximum of work from a lad. And, as if these were not enough, excessively long hours of labour were added. My employment consisted in continually carrying about forty pounds of clay upon my head, from the clay-heap to the table on which the bricks were made. When there was no clay, I had to carry the same weight of bricks. This labour had to be performed, almost without intermission, for *thirteen hours* daily. Sometimes my labours were increased by my having to work all night at the kilns.

‘The results of the prolonged and severe labour to which I was subjected, combined with the cruel treatment experienced by me at the hands of the adult labourers, are shown in marks which are borne by me to this day. On one occasion I had to perform a very heavy amount of labour. After my customary day’s work, I had to

carry 1,200 9in. bricks from the maker to the floors on which they are placed to harden. The total distance thus walked by me that night was not less than fourteen miles, seven miles of which I traversed with eleven pounds weight of clay in my arms, besides lifting the unmade clay and carrying it some distance to the maker. The total quantity of clay thus carried by me was five and a half tons. For all this labour I received *sixpence*! The fatigue thus occasioned brought on a serious illness, which for several weeks prevented my resuming work. My reason for giving these personal experiences is that they are precisely similar to those which are being endured by large numbers of children and young persons at the present day, notwithstanding the existence of the Factory and Workshops Act.'

"A light and genteel occupation for children truly, even if their education and morals do suffer! Perhaps the less said about morals the better, in the face of one sentence of Mr. Smith's paper. He says, 'Out of the many hundreds of brick-yard girls whose career I have personally marked, not more than a dozen have become decent and respectable wives.' What about the others? There still seem to be plenty of *children* in the brickyards.

"And the worst of all this is, that the Act which was passed to prevent it is powerless, from the almost culpable ignorance on the part of its compilers of the existence of such evils. As the law stands, yards employing less than fifty hands are exempt from the operations of the Factory Act. The majority of the brick-yards do employ less than fifty hands, and consequently escape its censure. The manifest injustice and absurdity of such an exemption are obvious. Mr. Smith points to one instance in which a brick-yard numbering more than fifty hands came under Government inspection. A boy under twelve years of age was prohibited working by the inspecting surgeon, and the next day was found employed in one of the smaller yards, and working eighty-four hours per week.

"When the evil is so very terrible, and the remedy is so very easy, will not somebody try and put a stop to this reproach to the building trade?"

APPEAL.

In order to accumulate further *data* on the subject, I printed and widely distributed over the brick-yards of England, the following circular :—

“Spring Cottage,

“Coalville, near Leicester.

“SIR,—Being engaged in collecting a somewhat extensive series of occasional papers and correspondence in relation to the employment of children of both sexes in brick and tile-yards, and wishing still further to verify and confirm my own personal experience and observation on the evil results of such employment, I will take it as a favour if you inform me of any *facts* bearing on the inquiry. As I wish to promulgate ‘the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,’ allow me to ask that you will take every possible precaution to furnish me with nothing but what you believe to be true and accurate. I am desirous to have the brick-yard children placed under the protection of an Act similar to the Factory Act, or an Amended Workshops Act. On the other side, I note certain points that may suggest things whereon you can give information.

“I am, Sir, respectfully yours,

“GEORGE SMITH.”

1.—What is the general treatment which the children receive at the hands of the men for whom they work ?

2.—What are the hours of labour during which the children work in the summer and winter respectively ?

3.—What is the moral and physical condition of the brick-yard children therein ?

4.—Are there any girls employed ?—if so what proportion ? and are they mixed with the boys and men ?

5.—What is the nature and amount of work the children have to perform ?

6.—What educational opportunities are given to the children ? What interest is shown by master and men in their welfare ?

7.—At what ages are the children sent to work in brick and tile-yards in your neighbourhood ?

8.—If women are employed, what is their general moral and religious character ?

9.—What proportion of the adult brick-yard workers in your neighbourhood are *bonâ fide* members of any Christian Church ?

10.—The name of the brick and tile-yards, and also of employers, referred to by you ?

11.—I shall use no information furnished without the writer's consent.

I have in my possession a sheaf of answers to the preceding circular, and such a body of sorrowful statistics few possess. I hold them for production ultimately, when evidence may be taken by parliamentary inquiry. Meanwhile I must state that, under the first question,—What is the general treatment which the children receive at the hands of the men for whom they work ?

Very appalling are the returns. Such tragedies of ill-usage as are reported to me, with name and address in full, are unimaginable.

Under the second question,—What are the hours of labour during which the children work in the summer and winter respectively ?

The *minimum* is from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., exclusive of going and returning, or full adult time.

Under the third question.—What is the moral and physical condition of the brick-yard children therein ?

The returns are equally deplorable with those to question first, although I must confess that I was not prepared for the favourable account given in many cases of the physical health of the children.

Under the fourth question,—Are there any girls employed?—if so, what proportion ? and are they mixed with the boys and men ?

I have again sorrowful returns on the frightful results of promiscuous working and night over-work.

Under the fifth question,—What is the nature and amount of work the children have to perform ?

I have, *to the letter*, and beyond, confirmation of the fullest calculations of the work exacted.

Under the sixth question,—What educational opportunities are given the children? What interest is shown by master and men in their welfare?

The answer, with the very fewest exceptions, is emphatically “None, NONE! NONE!”

Under the seventh question,—At what ages are the children sent to work in brick and tile-yards in your neighbourhood?

The answer again, *to the letter*, confirm my own personal experience and observation, viz., from 3½ to 12, and from 12 to 14.

Under the eighth question,—If women are employed, what is their general moral and religious character?

I have again most melancholy returns. Would that the FACTS were known.

Under the ninth question,—What proportion of the adult brick-yard workers in your neighbourhood are *bonâ fide* members of any Christian Church?

Once more the answers are very mournful. I take one from near Birmingham as a type of numerous similar.

“I have been brought up at the brick trade in this neighbourhood, and have been in it about 45 years, and in that time I cannot call to mind more than five or six.”

I have to thank such of the Clergy and ministers of the Gospel as have filled up my circular. To those who have put obstacles in the way I must add, opposition is “too late.” And God helping me, I shall not rest until the wrongs of the children in the brickyards are redressed.

Until then, may the

Cry of the Children

reverberate as with the “seven thunders.” Until the hearts of the English brick-yard slave-drivers become softened, the schoolmaster commences his work, the blunted, stunted, and hardened feeling of the parents becomes refined and alive to

their duty, our legislators and law-givers have bowed their heads and opened their ears to the cries of the "little ones." And our good Queen, with her heart full of sympathy and kindness towards the children of the working classes, has listened to the pitiful, sorrowful, and tear-fetching tale of woe the children of both sexes in the brick and tile-yards are sending upward daily, and Parliament has responded to "the cry" in such a way as to throw over the poor brick-yard child the mantle of protection and the shield of the law, such as the children belonging to other working classes of Her Majesty's subjects are in possession of, and the English brick-yard child demands. And until this has been accomplished I shall knock ! knock ! knock ! and continue to knock at the doors of "both Houses" till "their cry" has been heard, their wrongs righted, and sufferings at an end, so far as law and precept can bring about.

THE CRY OF THE BRICK-YARD CHILDREN.

Is there no pity, in country or city,
For the poor little brickmaker lad ?
'Mid the bricks and the clay he toils all the day,
And often his young heart is sad.
Less kind words than blows his master bestows,
Upon the hapless young drudge,
Who must wearily run, 'neath the pitiless sun,
'Till he reels—and yet must 'nt mudge.

Oh God ! who hast moulded mankind, and enfolded
A spirit undying in clay,
Let not man erase all childhood's sweet grace,
That rivals the lambkins at play.
By Toil's weary round, Thine image is ground
From hearts that are pliable yet.
Accurs'd is the gain, wrung from infancy's pain,
That's coin'd from infancy's sweat.

The Cry of the Children from

On the altar of self the high priesthood of self—
The heathen of Britain—do lay,
The children: Oh spare! the innocents there;
Smite the hands uplifted to slay
The mind ere it's grown, the soul ere it's known
The beauty and freshness of earth!
The blossoms of youth, the seedlings of truth,
Should not be chok'd up at birth.

From the brick-yards a cry goes up to the sky,
“Are there none to pity and save?
Who dare boldly demand, throughout our good land,
The freedom of the brick-yard slave?”
The lambs of God's fold, as Israel of old,
'Gainst the breakers of His righteous law,
In piteous tone, to Him make their moan,
“Must we still make bricks without straw?”



AN EVEN GIRL "HARRIED" OR "KNOCKED-UP."

Part III.

*The History and Progress of the Movement and
the Passing of the Act.*

AS the brick-yard question has taken such hold upon the nation, and in its having become quite a national one immediately my first edition began to be circulated, it cannot be considered egotism on my part if I trace, briefly, the movement from its source down to the present time, so far as the part I have had to play, under the guidance of Providence, in the matter—and that is not a little one—if I may be allowed to judge from the time I have most willingly given to the cause of the poor little ones, money spent, the heaps of letters now lying before me from the highest personages in the land down to the poorest brick-yard girl scarcely able to scrawl her own name, the distribution of my books, and the hopes of Heaven which have attended my footsteps and guided my actions in my humble efforts right far back from the commencement in my almost infancy, down to the present time, in the midst of the sneers of fools, the laughter of fanatics, the spleen of madmen, and the malice and spite of enemies.

In the days of my childhood it was my lot to work late and early among the brick-yards abutting on the canals. Consequently I was brought daily in contact with the children employed in boating and in brick and tile making the converse side of which life was shown to me both at the Sunday-school and at home, which told me plainly that their habits, *i.e.*, the children employed, hours of labour, conversation, language, and education, were such as required a

thorough reformation and a complete change, if the brick and tile-yard workers, and those employed on canal boats, were to stand side by side and shoulder to shoulder in the battle of life upon equal grounds with other bread-toilers of Her Majesty's subjects.

Now came the question which had been rumbling in my childish mind for some time. How was this to be brought about? Having scarcely entered into my teens, I could read but little, and writing was out of the question; the only thing I could do was to "open my mouth." This I resolved to do, and ever after this took good care to let the wrong-doings of the brick-yard workers be noised about in all places to such a pitch during the many years intervening between them and the time of my taking charge of a works . myself, the outside world, and those who did not know my motives, would oftentimes say, his "hand will be against every man and every man's hand against him." So far as regards the selfish, narrow, short-sighted part of the brick and tile making community is concerned, the sly kicks and cuffs I was in the habit of receiving from the workers, big and little—big in a statuary sense and wickedness, but little in brains and object for good—in the "dark corners," "at the back of the pitches" and in the "flue holes," had a contrary effect to what the bestowers of those "hell-born" blessings intended, and served only to spur me onwards in my tiny resolves, instead of driving me backwards, to show up the evil doer to the world at all risks. Many times, no doubt, they would have liked to have had "a go at me" and pitched me into the pit; but the "so far shall they go and no farther" Hand came to my rescue. In this way things kept moving on till the time arrived for me to take the management of a brick and tile-yard myself, which I did, and set to work in earnest to bring about the reforms I considered necessary, in fact, they formed the foundation of the Brick-yard Bill; or, as the fifth clause now stands in the Factories and Workshops Amendments Act of 1871. First, I would not

employ any female labour, though in a neighbourhood where it could be had cheaply. Second, I would not employ children under 12 years of age. Third, I would insist that all hands should commence work on Monday morning, and no overtime to be allowed with children. Fourth, I would allow none but young men to sit up with the kilns all night, and these were to be paid as for the day, and not the miserable pittance of 1s. a kiln, as in the Staffordshire districts. Fifth, I would have the sheds and other places built as conveniently and with as much light and fresh air passing through them as I considered needful. By having these things provided for, much comfort was secured for the children with less labour to the men, and with no loss to the employers. Sixth, for some years I had a short mid-day service of a few minutes' duration in the work-room during the dinner hour, which was attended with good results; and I say it "without fear of contradiction" that all these things were carried out without the loss of one farthing to my employers during the 14 years I had the charge of the works; 12 of which were previous to the passing of the Act in 1871. The same I state categorically with reference to the efforts I put forth all through the long years to secure the passing of the Act—"the boot has been on the other leg"—they have been gainers by thousands of pounds, as a consequence of the action I have taken in the matter, and so in like manner at other yards, where a proper system has been carried out and vice discouraged.

I think it was about the year 1863, whether by accident, design, duty, or curiosity, I cannot say, Mr. Robert Baker, C.B., one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Factories came to Coalville to look over the works I had the charge of; the result of this visit was that an intimacy sprung up which has not died out to this day; and, as I have stated, a considerable number of letters have passed between us and interviews taken place, with reference to the passing of a Brick-yard Act; but from some cause or other, not being

behind the scenes, to understand the mysteries of "The Craft," not much headway was gained with them in high quarters. I am not a fatalist or a believer in dreams, except on rare occasions; but it may be worth while to relate the following to show how, step by step, my way has opened with regard to the children:—On one night during the summer of 1868—which night I shall never forget—I dreamt that I was going up an exceeding high mountain, and as I was starting from the base of it to get to the summit, thousands of poor little ragged, half naked brick-yard children, of both sexes, clustered round me, with tears in their eyes, and with looks and cries that pierced my innermost soul, which I cannot and shall not attempt to erase from my memory—"Master, pull me up!" "Master, pull me up!" Some of the children would lay hold of my coat, others I would take by the hand, and in this way I toiled up the mountain till near the top; and just as I was about to give up the struggle, Mr. Gladstone appeared upon the scene. We both now began to pull the poor things up to the top, but were not strong enough for the task—a labour of love—and just as we were about to give up the struggle, our good and noble Queen came to the rescue, and the result was we finally landed them upon the top. Taking off my hat, I shouted at the top of my voice: "Hurrah! hurrah! We've won! we've won!" to such a degree, that I awoke my wife in bed with shouting. I was in a great state of perspiration, and she was afraid I was "gone beside myself." Strange to say, this state of things happened three nights in succession.

A similar thing took place during the commencement of my Canal crusade among the canal boat children, with this exception, that I was engaged in pulling the poor children out of the muddy canal on to a nice clean towing path. How far these have, and will, come to pass, the future will show.

From an irresistible impulse behind me, I cannot tell the "why and the wherefore," I determined that this

state of things should not continue much longer, so resolved with much nervousness and trembling to make, what at that time I considered a bold venture in sending a letter to the press (see page 57). Immediately I saw the letter in print I thought, such were my views of the most powerful machinery of this country, that the whole thing was in reality accomplished, and I should be flooded with shoals of letters from all parts of the country about it; but to my chagrin and surprise no one condescended to notice it. This manifestation of the coldness of public opinion was not going to baffle me in this way, and I kept firing shot after shot until first one London and country daily and weekly paper after another began to take up the cry of the wronged little ones. The *Daily News*, *Standard*, and in fact all the other papers published throughout the length and breadth of the land, be it to their everlasting credit, came to the rescue. The Press in this case and also in the canal movement has been my greatest lever, without the help of which I could have done but little, and if ever the Press of this country did good service for the future fathers and mothers of Old England and the eternal welfare of the children, it has been the case with the help rendered to me with my young clients, the Brick-yard and Canal children. *The British Workman* had, at my suggestion, a wood-cut on January 1st, 1870—the first I think that had appeared—shewing the child slavery of the Brick-fields of England for which I supplied the article and photographs. The Home Secretary, Mr. W. E. Forster, Mr. Gladstone, and other cabinet ministers and officials, acknowledged my appeals from time to time, in which I enclosed photographs of the children employed, though many of my letters brought forth the usual official reply “I am desired by Mr. Bruce to acknowledge the receipt of your letter,” &c., and the same from Mr. Forster. Events have since transpired to show that I had in them, as well as other officials, and Her Majesty the Queen, sincere and true friends who were ready and willing to help

on the cause I have in hand. Mr. Forster, speaking with reference to my poor unworthy self at a meeting on March 28th, 1879, and over which Lord Aberdare presided, said he "had come in contact with Mr. Smith when he was connected with the Education Department, and he at once felt that he was a man who might have attention paid to him, that he was a man of energy and single-mindedness whose efforts were sure to be fruitful and good. That they have been fruitful every one now knows." Lord Aberdare spoke in a similar strain, which compliments I do not deserve. Though not making the progress I could wish and no promise coming from Downing Street and Whitehall to take up the children's cause, I determined if possible to bring the case of my "little ones" before the Social Science Congress at Newcastle-on-Tyne in 1870. Consequently I succeeded in obtaining a promise to allow me to read a paper; the results of which are well known. My nibbling and barking up to this date at the monster sin and iniquity had scarcely done more than to lift one of his eyelids a little which had remained closed, owing to the Earthenware Act of 1864 not being strong enough to open it. Now the demon-looking animal, brick-yard enormities, "smelt a rat." The giant began to think Jack was at his heels, which proved too true, the consequence was that a death-like struggle took place in the Potteries—I might say all over the country for it affected the brick-making interest in the whole of the United Kingdom—over my statements and suggestions as stated in my paper. The conflict was terribly severe, lasting for fourteen weeks, and nearly costing me my life; illness at home, effigy burnt at Coalville (at first and till the last hour it was decided that the old gentleman should be burnt at the stake opposite my door; but, in accordance with all their other acts, they had not the courage to do it publicly, so they did it secretly, and in the dark), and threatened with personal violence at Tunstall, later on at Swadlincote by a brick-master—I won't call him a gentleman—in the street in broad daylight, and at other

places, as I have travelled about, wife and children insulted in the streets, lies circulated by thousands, malice to be seen in every action of my opponents, though, sorry to say, some of them wore the garb of sanctity occasionally, and put on the face of piety as circumstances required. Poor things, I have often pitied them ; they do not seem to have brains sufficient to fill a walnut, and crawling upon their belly through the earth and hissing at the moon would be their proper vocation. But, thank God, the cause of justice, truth, and the children, won.

The action of some of the evil-mongers and child-haters, who have been lurking about my path for years, reminds me of the tale of a poor old, semi-idiotic, ignorant gipsy-woman, related by her to my wife a few weeks since, which was to the effect that she, with other gipsy women, in looking among some old dried sticks in a gentleman's garden, for something to light a fire, discovered a young snake, which, by some unaccountable means, found its way through a broken tooth, down her throat, and there it remains to this day. It is alive, she said, and keeps growing, and the doctors tell her that there is not any medicine in their surgery that will kill it ; and under its influence she is neither well nor happy, trying to sow discord, breed mischief, and do all the harm an evil disposition can do wherever she goes.

This is an ignorant gipsy's tale, but pointing to a moral, with a lesson to be learnt out of it. My detractors would do well to study it.*

I have received letters lately from some of these who took up cudgels against me, stating that I was right in reality, and they were wrong ; in fact, this is and has been the uni-

* Daylight must be shed upon the inner and immoral life of a gipsy's tent and a showman's van some day. The cries of the children that are taking place within these places must go Heavenward till their cries are heard, and the wretched abodes are registered, as canal boats are, and the poor children receiving education under the influence of the School Board Officer. More of this. Within this and similar stories are buried the seeds of future action.

versal opinion in the districts all along. The result of that fight and the sending of many thousands of circulars and letters all over the country to brickmakers and others brought forth my first edition, as accepted by Her Majesty on June the 10th, 1871. Now was the time to "strike the iron while it was hot."

1871 had dawned upon the country. Parliament had assembled and I could obtain no satisfactory statement from the Government that they intended bringing before the House a Brick-yard Bill; my only chance seemed now to hasten the publication of my book; this was done in May following. I soon found out that a dribbling sale, while the session was fast passing along, would not accomplish my object, so I set to work and scattered gratuitously 2,000 copies all over the land among peers, members of Parliament, magistrates, and the members of the press; the result was truly marvellous, as the subsequent events which transpired will show. On May the 25th, 1871, I wrote my first letter to Lord Shaftesbury as follows, feeling anxious to secure his lordship's help in the matter:—

"MY LORD,—Allow me in asking your acceptance of the accompanying tractate to hope for your lordship's sympathy and aid in my humble efforts to secure the protection of Government for brick-yard children. I feel sure that your lordship will be touched by the tragical facts submitted, and yet the half has not been told."

To which Lord Shaftesbury replied on June the 12th:—

"I have received the pamphlet you have been good enough to send me. The state of things is simply wicked, and the continuance of it without excuse."

Having had a foretaste of the effects my book would be likely to produce by the reviews of it in the press, and the agitation which was spreading, and in the opinion of my literary friends, would be likely to still further extend all

over the country, I considered the next best step would be to see one of the two chief Inspectors of Factories on the subject, so in accordance with this resolve, I went to Leamington to see Mr. Robert Baker, C.B., and we arranged to go to London to see Mr. Mundella, which we did, with a view of enlisting his sympathy in the cause of the "little ones," and to try to elicit from him what steps the Government would be likely to take in the matter. For a few days the thing hung as in a balance between the granting of a Royal Commission to enquire into the conditions of the brick-yard women and children—a step which I had been urging, in my humble way, the Government to take—and legislative action, when I received a letter from Mr. Mundella, under date June 4th, 1871, as follows :—

"Dean's Yard, Westminster.

"DEAR SIR,—It seems that there is little chance of the extension of the Factory Acts so as to include brick-yard children during the present session. I have determined therefore to bring the matter before the House in some shape or other. Please send me any other information which you think may be useful, and I will try to utilise it in the interest of the poor children and of humanity. I am grateful to you for your persistent agitation of this question. I hope success will ere long crown your christian efforts."

My book, with letters received from various parts of the country bearing upon the subject, and answers and replies to the circulars I had addressed to brickmakers, clergymen, ministers of different religious communities in the United Kingdom, were duly forwarded to Mr. Mundella, and the following is his reply under date June 8th, 1871 :—

"MY DEAR SIR,—I am greatly obliged to you for your letters and pamphlets. I shall lose no time in pressing on a Bill to bring the brick-yards under the Factory Acts. I think inquiry is unnecessary, as we have ample grounds for legislation. I now only want to get at details. Now, as to

females, do you think we should altogether prohibit females? I am very doubtful whether Parliament would permit us to interfere with the employment of women. Pray give me your opinion on these practical questions, and I will push on with a Bill. I have great promise of support, including the Home Secretary."

To this letter I replied under date June 9th, 1871, as follows :—

"MY DEAR SIR,—In reply to your favour of yesterday, I am right glad to find that you are losing no time in introducing a Bill for the benefit of the brick-yard children, and to place the works under inspection. With reference to your inquiry about the employment of girls at brick and tile-yards, I am decidedly opposed to their being employed ; and I do most sincerely hope that you will do all you can to prevent them ; this is one of the main points that I wanted an inquiry upon. I am convinced that such disclosures would be made that the Government would put their hand upon the system at once."

Mr. Mundella accordingly introduced his Bill entitled *Factory Acts (Brick and Tile-Yards) Extension, 1864, 34 and 35 VICT.*, and it was read the first time June 13th, 1871. Upon the back of it are the names of Lord Sandon, Mr. Thomas Hughes, Mr. Ackroyd, Mr. Auberon Herbert, and Mr. Samuelson, and it ran as follows :—

"Be it enacted by the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal and Commons in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows :—

"1. So much of the *Factories Acts Extension Act, 1864* (in this Act referred to as the 'Principal Act') as excepts from the operation thereof the manufacture of bricks and tiles, not being ornamental tiles, shall be repealed.

"2. The provisions of the Principal Act shall as regards the factories to which the Principal Act is extended to this Act be modified as follows, viz. :—

“1. No female, and no child under ten years of age, shall be employed in any such factory.

“2. Male young persons of the age of sixteen years and upwards, may between the thirty-first day of March and the first day of the following October in any year, be employed on any days except Sunday, for a period exceeding the period for which they might under the Factory Acts be employed, provided that—

- (a) They are not to be employed for more than three days in any one week ; and
- (b) They are not so employed before six in the morning nor after nine in the evening on any day on which they are so employed ; and
- (c) They are in addition to the other times allowed for meals allowed a further half hour for an extra meal at five in the afternoon of each day on which they are so employed.

“3. The Principal Act as amended and modified by the Acts amending the same, and by this Act, shall, excepting the temporary provision thereof, be incorporated with this Act.

“4. This Act shall not come into operation until the *first day of January one thousand eight hundred and seventy two.*

“5. This Act may be cited for all purposes as ‘The Factories Acts’ (Brick and Tile-yards) Extension Acts, 1871.’”

After the Bill was read the first time, Mr. Cawley, M.P. for Salford, threatened to “put a sprag into the wheel” by moving an amendment, stating as his reason that the brick-yards in the Manchester and Salford districts were properly conducted. Perhaps Mr. Cawley considered that brick-yards were properly conducted when brickmakers use gunpowder to blow up each other’s houses, scatter scuttlesful of needles into the clay that had to be handled with the hands, illuse and overwork the women, and cruelly illtreat the children who “carry off” the bricks, while working them from 16

to 18 hours per day. To satisfy myself on the point, and also to strengthen my case, I went to Manchester and Salford, and spent a few days in making inquiries upon the spot, and the following are the results of my observation, and which I handed to Mr. Mundella under date July 5, 1871, and run as follows :—

“MY DEAR SIR,—The following are the results of my personal inquiries into the condition of the *employés* of the brick and tile-yards in the neighbourhood of Manchester and Salford. 1. The yards are not under either the Workshops Regulation Acts or the Factory Extension Acts. 2. The *employés* work from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m., with two hours allowed for meals; but this is in conformity to the rules of the Brickmakers' Unions only. 3. Working on Sundays is carried out in some yards but not in all. 4. Children from seven years and upwards carry bricks and perform other work between the hours before stated, viz., 6 a.m. and 8 p.m. 5. Girls from seven and upwards, and also grown-up females, assist in picking up and tooling bricks, &c., &c. Some of the women are palpably *enceinte*, as can be seen by the most careless observer, and these girls scarcely wear more than an old ragged garment. 6. The distances children between 10 and 14 years of age have to travel will average from 16 to 18 miles daily, half this distance carrying the moulds and bricks weighing more than 10 lbs., and working more than 70 hours per week. 7. The reason given by the men for causing the children to begin work so young is that ‘if the children do not begin early they cannot perform what is required of them, and become stiff-jointed, saucy, and independent.’ 8. A moulder will earn between £3 and £4 per week, and the children carrying off the bricks from the moulder from 18s. to 20s. per week. 9. The women say they would rather be employed in the yard than do household work, consequently their homes and their children are greatly neglected.”

While the leading articles and reviews were appearing in nearly all the influential papers and magazines in the country urging the Government to take up the cause of the children

at once, the fire spread to the United States of America, and caused quite a sensation there. I was honoured on two different occasions by having extracts read out of my "Cry of the Children from the Brick-yards of England," in the American House of Representatives by the Hon. W. D. Kelly, the Member for Philadelphia. On purpose to keep the stone rolling I sent some photographs of the children to Mr. Thomas, the manager of the *Graphic*, and asked him to assist me, which he did, and sent Mr. Herbert Johnson to take some sketches; those duly appeared in June, 1871. Now the whole country was aroused from one end to the other, for by referring to Mr. Redgrave's letter, one of Her Majesty's Chief Inspectors of Factories, it will be observed that there were three Bills before the House in the space of about six weeks, dealing with very much the same thing, except to the extent I desired.

"FACTORY INSPECTOR'S OFFICE,

"Whitehall, London,

"July 13, 1871.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I must congratulate you very heartily upon the success you have achieved. What a large number of children will owe education, happiness, possibly life to your exertions.

"The Bill is quite safe. I was very anxious that the Government should take it up, and by incorporating it in their Bill make sure of its passing this session. Two Bills are in the Commons, and the other in the Lords crossing each other, and enacting very much the same thing, were liable to cause great confusion, but that is happily now avoided.

"With my sincere congratulation,

"I remain, yours sincerely,

"ALEX. REDGRAVE."

The Government had for a long time seen the slipshod and inefficient manner in which the local authorities carried out the Workshops Acts, but from want of enthusiasm on behalf of the public, an absence of "influential deputations,"

"mass meetings," and "public gatherings," they did not care to tackle the subject, surrounded as it was, with such a barrier of selfish interest. Layer upon layer of prejudice, one manufacturer after another adding one coat of mail upon another till the monster soul-killing tyrant—cruelty and greed—was so surrounded and secured by "personal rights," "love of liberty," "doing as they like with their own," that it almost made the wisest, most cautious, and stoutest hearted hesitate before they faced the foe to human happiness, civilisation, national life and progress. For early in 1871 Mr. Bruce wrote to me stating that, "It is doubtful whether a Bill for the purpose can be introduced during next session." The Government, with such statesmen as Lord Aberdare (the most kind-hearted Home Secretary we have had for a long time, passing many useful social measures, and who will ever be remembered as the first to grapple by legislative enactments, the drinking customs of the country), Lord Morley, Mr. W. E. Forster, and Mr. Gladstone in the Cabinet was not likely to let the opportunity pass which the Brick-yard agitation had caused, without making an attempt at the last hour to place the inspection of all the workshops and factories in the country in the hands of the Government, a thing for which I had been humbly striving from the first; and Lord Morley, without loss of time, introduced a Bill into the House of Lords for that purpose: this was done, and the Bill was read a second time on July the 10th. At this stage the Brick-yard Bill and the Government Bill had both passed the second reading, one in the Commons, and the other in the Lords, both dealing pretty much with the same thing; and as Mr. Redgrave states, would be likely to cause confusion, if both passed into law, and to prevent this, the Government said to me through Mr. Redgrave, Mr. Mundella, and Lord Shaftesbury, that if I would consent for them to fix the age of sixteen for females to work in brick and tile-yards, and let the question of "no female" drop they would make it a Government measure. To this I

agreed, but very reluctantly, and under fear of not having the Bill passed into law during the session. On July the 11th, Lord Shaftesbury moved his address to the Crown upon the subject, and his lordship also did me the honour of taking his quotations from my book, supplementing them with his own remarks as follows:—"Now this is not exaggerated by an hair's breath. Indeed, from my own personal observation, I can state that it is under the mark in regard to the abominations which are practised." The address did good service; and it also shewed to the country that I had a good cause in hand, and that my statements were not overdrawn in the least: the same could not be said of the selfish detractors who had been barking at my very heels for years on account of the action I had taken in the matter, for which I forgive them, and pray that God may deal mercifully with them when the final accounts come to be reckoned up. The day after his lordship moved his address he wrote to me as follows:—

"24, Grosvenor Square, W.C.,

"July 12, 1871.

"DEAR MR. SMITH,—Thank God, I carried the address last night—we shall have this year a Bill for the children in the brick-yards.

"Bless God for His grace on your efforts.

"Yours faithfully,

"SHAFTESBURY.

"George Smith, Esq., Coalville."

Mr. Mundella wrote to me in the same joyous and encouraging strain under date as below.

"14, Dean's Yard,

"Westminster,

"July 12, 1871.

"DEAR MR. SMITH,—Let me congratulate you on Lord Shaftesbury's speech last night, and over the results which we have been able to secure. I arranged with him that he

should move an address to the Crown, and that the Government should answer by incorporating the Bill with theirs, and get everything through during the present session. May God reward you for all your good works on behalf of those poor women and children.

“Faithfully yours,

“A. J. MUNDELLA.

“George Smith, Esq.”

The Government accordingly adopted the suggestions stated in my book as embodied in the Bill brought in by Mr. Mundella, and incorporated them in their bill, thus forming the famous fifth clause, and reads as under :—

“5. After the first day of January, one thousand eight-hundred and seventy-two, no female under the age of sixteen years, and no child under the age of ten years, shall be employed in the manufacture of bricks and tiles, not being ornamental tiles, and any female or child who is employed in contravention of this section shall be deemed to be employed in a manner contrary to the provisions of the Factory Acts 1833 to 1871, and the Workshops Acts 1867 to 1871.”

The Bill had the hearty support of the Bishop of London, Viscount Midleton, and other peers, and was duly read the third time, and sent down to the House of Commons to meet with a little rough handling at the hands of “vested interests,” for Mr. Cawley, the member for Salford—a brick-making district—whether at the instigation of the unions, men, or masters, I cannot say, but certain it is that he moved to add after clause 3 at end, “Provided,

“That in the case of any borough in which the local authority has enforced or shall, within six months after the passing of this Act, resolve to enforce the provisions of the said Acts and shall be enforced by the local authority, and any officers appointed by any such local authority shall have the like powers as are provided for the time being by the

inspectors, or sub-inspectors of Factories with respect to Workshops and persons employed therein.

The clause was intended as a side-wind to upset the whole thing. If Mr. Cawley had succeeded in his endeavours in this direction, he would have had the satisfaction of thwarting and crushing one of the best, if not *the best*, pieces of social legislation passed by Mr. Gladstone's Government.

Thanks to Lord Aberdare, the Marquis of Hartington, Lord John Manners, Lord Morley, Mr. W. E. Forster, Lord Frederick Cavendish, Mr. W. U. Heygate, Mr. A. Pell, Mr. P. A. Taylor, Mr. Mundella, and others, he was frustrated in his design.

Mr. Sclater-Booth met the Bill more openly and straightforwardly as follows :—

“On motion for going into Committee on Factories and Workshops Acts Amendment Bill, to move, that this House will, upon this day three months, resolve itself into the said Committee.”

This motion was soon shelved, and except a little “cross firing” the Bill was allowed to go on to the end of the chapter. Lord John Manners, be it to his credit, was for making the Bill so as to include the Government establishments, which were exempt from Government inspection on account of their being Government establishments, but this was passed over for some reason or other.

The 16th of August, 1871, at about 1.30 a.m., with almost the stillness of death, with only one gentleman—Mr. Taylor, Sub-Inspector of Factories, Liverpool—in the speaker's gallery, but myself, I shall never forget so long as there is a drop of “the red water” in my body. While Mr. Bruce, the Home Secretary—now Lord Aberdare—was moving the third reading of the Factory and Workshops Act Amendment Bill, my blood seemed to be freezing in my veins, my hands and feet began to tingle as if they were full of “pins and needles,” my head felt as if there was no life

left in it, and just as the speaker put the words "All those that say 'Aye! Aye! No! No! the Ayes have it'" the climax came, and I firmly believe that if I had not immediately jumped up and began to shake, stir, and move myself, I should soon have been insensible upon the floor. Happily this sensation soon passed off. Mr. Mundella saw me in the gallery, and he beckoned me to go down to the lobby. I went down, and received the hearty congratulations, shakes of the hands, taps upon the shoulders from Mr. Bruce, Mr. Mundella, Mr. Heygate, Lord John Manners and several other Members of Parliament. As in the case of the "Canal Boats Act" which was the last Bill that passed into law in 1877, so the "Brick-yard Bill, or Factory and Workshops Acts Amendment Bill" was the last to receive the Royal assent on August 21st, 1871.

I may here remark that while the Liberal Government was passing the Factory and Workshops Act Amendment Bill, the leading Conservatives on the opposite benches did good service and *vice versa* was the case in the passing of the Canal Boats Act; the Conservatives being in office, the leading Liberals on the opposite benches, amongst whom were the Marquis of Hartington, the Right Hon. W. E. Forster, Lord F. Cavendish, and many others, did equally good service.

"And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the Lord. And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers. And I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant. And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning them which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the Lord."
Exodus, Chap. 6, v. 2, 4, 5, 7, 8.

I would thank God with ten thousand voices, if I had them, for the glorious results that have attended my humble efforts for the good of the children. My life and my all for the children.

SAVED.

“The wind is spent and the gale is past,
And the morning sun shines out at last ;
It shines on a strip of yellow sand
And a good ship sinking in sight of land.

Over her deck and her battered side
Lazyingly washes the ebbing tide.
Out of the struggle and deadly strife,
Lo ! nothing saved but a baby life.

A wee frail thing is the one poor waif,
A wee frail thing to be sound and safe.
But all forgotten its brief alarms
It gaily crows in the stranger’s arms.

A sailor looks at the little form,
‘Tis a tiny craft to have stemmed the storm.’
He sighs a bit as he bends him low,
And his thoughts fly back to long ago.

Just such a babe on his young wife’s breast,
With clinging fingers his son caressed ;
Just such another—but where is he ?
Wrecked on the voyage of life, may be.

Is this but spared that in years to come
It may drift away from its heavenly home ?
The baby laughs, as his boy once did,
Oh, will it be so ? may God forbid !

The sailor’s hand has a gentle touch
For the sake of the lad he loved so much ;
And soft from his lips are the words that fall,
‘God bless the children—God keep them all !’ ”

When Mr. Speaker said the "Ayes have it" it would have done me good to have shouted:—

" Sound the loud timbrel,
O'er Egypt's dark sea,
Jehovah hath triumphed,
His children are free."

OPPOSITION TO THE ACT.

SCARCELY had I done receiving the honourable plaudtis showered upon me by the highest personages in the land, and of all shades of politics, for the long and successful way in which my humble efforts had so far been brought to a satisfactory issue. Scarcely had the newspapers and magazines done heaping praises upon me for the work I had done, amongst which out of many others, in fact the whole of the Press have been my friends. *The Times, Daily News, Standard, Daily Telegraph, Pall Mall Gazette, Globe, Morning Post, Morning Advertiser, Leeds Mercury, Birmingham Post, Birmingham Daily Gazette, Manchester Guardian, Manchester Examiner and Times, Nottingham Journal, Nottingham Guardian, Sheffield Daily Telegraph, Sheffield Independent, Yorkshire Post, Newcastle Chronicle, Liverpool Daily Courier, Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury, Leicester Daily Post, Glasgow Daily Herald, The Graphic, Christian World, Builders' Weekly Reporter, Weekly Times, Budget, Lloyd's, Reynolds's, Figaro, Rock, Record, Primitive Methodist, Potteries Examiner, The Staffordshire Sentinel, Staffordshire Times, Leisure Hour, Sword and Trowel, St. James's Magazine, The Observer, School Board Chronicle, Schoolmaster, Leicester Free Press, Chronicle and Mercury, Advertiser and Journal, Sunday at Home, Night and Day, Christian Union, Punch, and a thousand others.* Scarcely had the Act been put into operation on January 1, 1872, and the Government net put across the edge of the "Rapids"

to prevent the women and children being hurried, by the abominable practices carried on in brick-yards, into the vortex of degradation, misery, and ruin beneath them, than there were those who with plausible clap-trap indulged in a political meeting, glossed over with pleasant countenances, and joined in singing—

“Britons never shall be slaves.”

to be seen in the dark on one side, under cover of these things, with knife in hand attempting to cut some of the cords to let the children through “the falls” so as to be caught by the soul grinders below. On the other side there were to be seen doing the same thing those who have got “fat and flourishing” out of the blood and sweat of the children; and who also “occupy the pulpit, and join in singing amongst the Sunday-school scholars on a Sunday afternoon,

“Joyfully, joyfully, onward we move,”

striving with all their “might and main” by heaving away with “crow bars,” “clay picks,” “polishing knives,” &c., at what they considered, or wished to be considered—for they must have known better—a technical flaw in the Act, “ornamental tiles,” and, sorry to say they very nearly succeeded—through Mr. Mundella, Mr. Melly, and certain sub-inspectors winking at it—in getting the Act rendered an abortive measure; happily they were discovered before it was too late, and the result has been that the magistrates, Royal Commission, and the Factory Act of 1878, have doubly strengthened the weak points in the Act.

Mr. Robert Baker, C.B., late one of Her Majesty’s chief Inspectors of Factories, wrote me under date February 10th, 1872 :—

“DEAR MR. SMITH,—I have several applications about ‘ornamental tiles’ what shall and what shall not be. I think the Earthenware Act did not intend to point to any other

tile being 'ornamental' than '*mosaic tiles*,' though I am aware that many ordinary tiles are used for ornamental purposes. Tell me by an early letter what you think about it."

To which I replied as follows on February the 11th :—

"DEAR SIR,—In reply to yours of the 10th inst., respecting the difference between 'ornamental tiles' and 'plain tiles' mentioned in the Factory Act which came into operation on January the 1st, so far as my long practical experience will bear me out, I will briefly explain what is meant by describing them as above. 'Ornamental tiles' is the term that can only be applied to mosaic, encaustic, and enamelled tiles. From their special peculiarities in the manufacture, they can only be made in earthenware manufactories, or similar works; in fact, the tiles are treated in many respects during the making, &c., as earthenware. The whole must be done under cover, and in warm, clean and dry factories or buildings. Some branches of the making are suitable for females, and that is one of the many reasons why they are called 'ornamental tiles' to distinguish them from plain tiles as described in the Act. 'Plain tiles' will include the manufacture of draining tiles, ridge tiles, roof tiles, garden tiles, quarries, and others of the same class, which process is carried on at ordinary brick and tile-yards; and from the heavy and dirty nature of the work is quite unsuitable for females under 17 years of age, and this is the reason why girls are prohibited to be employed on work of this kind. 'Plain tiles' are sometimes made to ornamental patterns, but the making and selling prices being about the same, they cannot by any possibility be included in the term 'ornamental tiles' mentioned in the Act. The difference in preparing the clay, &c., for the two kinds is enough to satisfy any one who has the least knowledge in the matter. The clay for 'ornamental tiles' has to be sifted, slipped, stained and dried. The clay for 'plain tiles,' as before described, is treated in the same manner as the ordinary clay for bricks, viz., simply grinding and pugging. The selling price for 'ornamental tiles' is from 5s. to £5 per square yard, while that of 'plain tiles' is from 1s. to 2s. per yard, or at prices varying from 20s. to 50s. per 1,000."

To which letter I received Mr. Baker's reply on February the 12th :—

“MY DEAR SIR,—Thank you very much for your opinion on ‘ornamental tiles.’ It is just what I wanted. I don’t fear yet but the time will come when you will be invited to join our department. The country won’t sit down without it.”

On February 29th, 1872, Mr. Baker wrote to me again as follows :—

“MY DEAR SIR,—What do you say to fire-clay brick-making girls, under sheds and under 16 years of age being permitted to work—they want them under—but over 14 years of age? Give me a good answer by return of post.”

To this letter I replied on March 2nd, 1872 :—

“MY DEAR SIR,—Having been from home during the last two days prevented me replying per return to yours of yesterday as desired, respecting the employment of girls at fire-brick making. The process of making fire-brick is exactly the same in nearly every respect as making ordinary bricks. The difference in the various description of bricks does not rest so much in the mode of manufacture, the nature of the clay, or in the raw material, in fact, it does not matter by what name a brick may be called, whether it be fire-brick, red brick, white brick, ornamental brick, blue brick, or brown brick, the work is equally heavy, dirty, and laborious in making any one of the different kinds. In my humble opinion Mr. Bruce will commit a most grievous mistake and a sad blunder if he consents to the employment of girls under 16 on any work of this kind. I cannot but think that he will see, if the case is fairly presented to him, that he is taking the first step towards making the Act, passed last session, a piece of useless legislation, viz., if he gives way on this point; and for the sake of the poor children I do most earnestly hope that he will think twice before he consents to allow it.”

In reply to this Mr. Baker wrote me—

“MY DEAR SIR,—You have done good service. I am clear something must come of it. I hear more and more of the spasmodic efforts of other districts.”

In consequence of the ignorance—wilfully or otherwise—of certain sub-inspectors, the opposition of men and masters in some districts, and quibbles over technicalities, the Act had become almost a dead letter, and rendered nugatory. So to prevent this sad fate attending it, I again asked permission to read another paper at the Social Science Congress to be held at Plymouth in October, 1872. This was granted. It was at this Congress that I made the personal acquaintance of Mr. P. W. Clayden, of the *Daily News*. My paper was read, and it was considered of such vital moment that it was telegraphed to the Birmingham daily papers and duly appeared in *extenso* the next morning in the *Gazette*, and lengthy extracts in nearly all the daily papers, causing quite a stir in the country, and as such I give it as follows, which for a time, at least, had the desired object of clearing up certain points, and causing the sub-inspectors to begin to be alive to their duty.

THE FACTORY INSPECTION—THE BRICK-YARDS.

THE following paper was read by me before the Social Science Congress held in Plymouth in 1872, and copied extensively into nearly all the London and country daily and weekly newspapers with a view of drawing public attention to the slipshod, fast and loose fashion in which the Brick-yard Act of 1871 was being carried out by those inspectors whose duty it was to see that it was faithfully and loyally observed all over the country without distinction or favouritism.

**“THE CRY OF THE CHILDREN FROM THE
BRICK-YARDS OF ENGLAND.**

“Such, Mr. President, ladies, and gentlemen, was the title which I ventured to give to the humble tractate in behalf of my little clients, the brick-yard children of England, with whose sufferings and wrongs I should have been less than human if my own bitter, early experiences had not given me the tenderest sympathy. That “cry,” like the older cry away in Egypt, went across our land, and I believe upward to Him to whom the lowliest and feeblest sigh, moan, whimper, quiet dropping tear, is heard; and it may be permitted me to claim some slight share, at any rate, in achieving the legislation of the past sessions for which, through weary and anxious years, I have argued and contended. Sir, and ladies and gentlemen, the measure may bulk over-largely to my eyes, and may seem relatively small to those not immediately aware of the interests involved and the ends sought; but I take the liberty to doubt if other louder and be-trumpeted measures will work the same beneficent results or form a whiter page in England’s moral and social reforms. I thank God that the application of the Factory Act to all our brick-yards is on the Statute-book. I wish from my innermost soul to recognise gratefully the service of commoners in the lower and nobles in the higher in carrying the measure and in bringing home to the national conscience our responsibility for the bodies and souls of our over-worked “little ones.” But, Mr. President, it would seem that Daniel O’Connell’s boast that he could drive a coach and six through any Act of Parliament, has already been actualised in the case of our brick-yards and brick-fields measure—would seem that, by some loose screw or other, a certain discretionary power is being assumed by the inspectors, whereby they take it upon themselves to authorise certain brick-yards and brick-fields to be placed still under the Act of 1864—that is, to withdraw themselves from the Act of 1871-2. I tell you, sir, I rubbed my eyes when I read certain things that you shall hear immediately, in the public prints; for though I am no lawyer, I thought I had sufficient law to tell me that no inspector and no subject or monarch within these realms may tamper with a statute once

passed. But, as I have said, it would appear that, pressure having been put upon Mr. Bruce, he, in his anxiety to do as well as say kind things, has looked at certain brick-yards and brick-fields, as the owners wished him to see, with a practical issue that I challenge, denounce, and that I make bold to affirm, must be revised, unless our measure is to be turned into a delusion, a mockery, and a snare."

"THE BRICK AND TILE TRADE OF NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE.

"Very great hardships have been experienced in this trade in consequence of those engaged in it having been placed under the provisions of the Brick-fields Sections of the Factories Act, passed in 1871. Until the commencement of the present year the manufactories were governed by the sections of the Act which has reference to potteries and the making of ornamental tiles, and recently an effort has been made by Mr. J. N. Peake to get the works again placed under the same restrictions.

"A deputation, consisting of Mr. Peake and Mr. Timmis, manufacturers, and Mr. Latham and Mr. Rowley, operatives, waited upon the Home Secretary, to whom it was introduced by Mr. Melly, M.P., who laid the case before Mr. Bruce in a very complete and able manner. The result of the interview was entirely successful, as will be seen from the following letter written by Mr. Bruce to Mr. John N. Peake at the latter's request :—

"Whitehall, 7th August, 1872.

"Sir,—I am directed by Mr. Secretary Bruce to acknowledge the receipt of the 19th ult., calling attention on behalf of the Tile-makers' Association of North Staffordshire, to the hardship caused to them by their being made subject to the provisions of the Brick-field and Tile Act, 1872, and praying that they may be again placed under those of the Act of 1864, and I am to inform you that Mr. Bruce having considered the matter, has instructed the Inspector of Factories to consider such tile manufactories as those to which you refer, as coming under the provisions of the Act 1864 accordingly.

"I am, sir, your obedient servant,

"(Signed) A. F. O. LIDDELL.

"Mr. J. N. Peake, Tunstall,
"Stoke-on-Trent."

Mr. Peake's persistent endeavours to secure justice to the trade, with which he is connected, were thus acknowledged at a meeting of the operatives' union:—

North Staffordshire Brick and Tile Workers' Association.

Resolution of Union Council Meeting, held at Newcastle, on Saturday, July 27th, 1872:—

“That this meeting feels it to be a duty incumbent upon it to express its gratitude, admiration, and high appreciation of the tact, courage, and persevering efforts put forth by John Nash Peake, Esq., in seeking the removal of the unjust application of the recent Act (as touching the employment of females) and which Act we felt almost to be an intolerable incubus, abridging our privileges, and in many ways putting us to much inconvenience and trouble. We unitedly express a fervent wish that he may live long to conserve the respectability and general interest of the trade.

“By order of the meeting,

“(Signed)

“JAMES ROWLEY, Secretary.”

At the same time, this resolution was passed to Mr. Melly:—

“That this meeting records its sense of the kindness manifested by G. Melly, Esq., M.P., to our deputation, and also the lively interest he took in our cause, and assures him that when an opportunity is presented we shall not be wanting, separately and conjointly, in reciprocating the kindness. This meeting is also pleased to recognise the fact that this is not a solitary instance in which Mr. Melly has taken an interest in the cause of working men, for, as close observers of his doings, we are satisfied that while he does not ignore the general weal of the community, yet he has uniformly distinguished himself as a champion for the rights of working men, and thus won for himself the true appellation of the working man's representative. Holding these views, we shall seek to permeate our fellow-men with them.

“By order of the meeting,

“JAMES ROWLEY.”

Mr. Melly replied as follows:—

“Liverpool, August 12, 1872.

“My dear Sir,—I beg to acknowledge receipt of the flattering resolution passed by the North Staffordshire Brick and Tile-makers' Association.

“It has been my earnest endeavour for the last five years faithfully to represent the various interests and wishes of the inhabitants of the Potteries, and nothing gives me more pleasure than to feel I have been of use when special circumstances have arisen in which my services have been required.

“Although I do not desire to claim the title of the representative of any particular class, believing that the true interests of each are bound up in the welfare of all, yet it is no small gratification to be assured that my course in Parliament has been carefully watched and generously appreciated by any section of the constituency I have the honour to serve.

“I am, my dear sir,

“Yours sincerely,

“GEORGE MELLY.

“Mr. James Rowley, Hon. Sec.,

“North Staffordshire Brick and Tile-makers' Association.”

The opinion of Mr. Mundella on the question at issue will be read with interest:—

“House of Commons, July 18, 1872.

“My dear Melly,—I cannot understand how the provisions of the Act 34 and 35 Vic., ch. 104, sec. 5, can apply to tileries in Staffordshire of the character of Mr. Peake's which were already under the Factory and Workshops Acts. The bill, as I had introduced it, had specified application to the manufacture of ordinary bricks and tiles, which were exempted from the operations of the Factory and Workshops Acts. When Mr. Redgrave took my bill in hand, and incorporated it in the Government Bill, I felt no longer any responsibility in respect to it. My own opinion is that the Act has been misconstrued. I cannot understand how the light tiles manufactured in workrooms, and used as ornamental flooring, coping, and roofings, can be classed with the common clay bricks and tiles with which the Act was intended to deal. Nor do I believe that manufactories already under the Factories and Workshops Act can be brought under the provisions of the Act of last year. Such certainly was not my intention, and I think Mr. Redgrave will tell you it was not his.

“Faithfully yours,

“A. J. MUNDELLA.”

"Mr. President, ladies, and gentlemen,—Appended to these letters is one from Mr. Mundella—a gentleman never to be named by me without respect—wherein he states that he never intended the Act to apply to 'light and ornament tile-work.' And on the strength—that is, as we shall see, the weakness—of this good-natured concession of Mr. Mundella, made perhaps with *un*-characteristic haste, these brick-yard employers of juvenile labour walk unblushingly off, and, I imagine, tongue in cheek, with the assumption that their goods and their manufactured articles belong to the merely "light and ornamental" work! Sir, impudent presuming on ignorance in 'high places' could hardly farther go. For what is the work done in these very brick-yards? I take Mr. Mundella's own terms, "ornamental floorings, copings, and roofings." Why, sir, these are made, in large part, of BLUE clay—the heaviest of all—and, as burdens to be carried in the taking, and working, and tending in dark and filthy sheds (so differing from the red bricks made in open day)—through all the usual processes—involve every evil, every injury to health, every enormity of over-work and immorality common to ordinary brick-making; while there is this aggravation, that the juvenile workers are kept in a constant dusty atmosphere, and under other influences most prejudicial to health. Mr. President, ladies, and gentlemen, on my word as a practical brick-maker and ornamental worker in clay, I stake my professional reputation of thirty-five years on the affirmation that, in these works, which have been thus permitted to be placed under the Act of 1864, the work done and now authorised to be done, by mere children, in the teeth of the Act of 1871–2 protecting them, is work not one whit less oppressive, less out of proportion to the years and strength of the workers, or less exposed to the wrong-doings of ordinary brick-making. That is to say professionally, I state deliberately, that tiles used for ordinary building and draining, roof-tiles, ridge-tiles, and ordinary quarries, building bricks, stable bricks, fire bricks, coping bricks, channel bricks, slope bricks, canted bricks, plain and ornamental white, blue, and brown bricks, garden tiles, skirting-edge tiles, and other goods of the same class wherein water, sand, iron, or coal dust is used to keep the clay from adhering to the moulds during the working, and are burnt in the ordinary round,

square, or oval kilns or ovens along with ordinary common bricks, and open to the direct action of the fire, come under the provisions of the Act of 1871-2. Seeing that in their manufacture children of both sexes have hitherto been employed at and under eight years of age with all the sad results so fully described by me, I reiterate the work placed in brick-yards and brick-fields is in no sense of the 'ornamental' work—as for instance, encaustic, mosaic, and glazed tiles under the Act of 1864, which are manufactured under entirely different process—that any neutral practical man would settle in five minutes, belongs to 1871-2 Act.

"Moreover, see how the case being altered alters the case. Before the Act of 1871-2, the Act of 1864 was got rid of by the very class of works which are now being put under it on the plea that they were 'plain tiles.' Now when the 1871-2 Act comes they claim to be 'ornamental,' and have, by scattering dust about in high quarters, succeeded for a time in blinding those who have the carrying out of the 1871-2 Act.

"Sir, I have noticed this in the outset, because if a law can be thus played fast and loose with, if Government officials are to be the first to give way to the clamour of those whose shoes, and toes within them, the protection of child-workers pinches, then I want this association to know it, I want my fellow-countrymen to know it, and I want a judgment upon it. For myself, I hope you will all agree with me that this is something not less new than monstrous that a law should be thus overridden, that a law of 1871-2, passed in the full knowledge of that of 1864, should be subordinated to that earlier law. The thing is incredible.

"The whole work of the Act of 1871-2 is thrown to the winds if the officials who have the carrying of it out neutralise its action as whim, favouritism, or ignorance may dictate.

"Another thing, sir, and ladies and gentlemen, that I feel bound to notice, is the utter inadequacy of the inspection of the brick-yards and brick-fields under the Act. To begin with—the number of inspectors is utterly insufficient. For one now employed there must be five at least, if the Act is to be a reality and not a sham, a protection and not an imposture, in the interest of children, and not the law-

breaking employers of children. This holds of the application of the Workshops' Regulation Act as well as of the Brick-yard of 1871-2.

"Here is a specimen of complaints that will yet thunder loudly in the ears of those who have the carrying out of Acts passed for the benefit of the children of the working classes, and ultimately the national health, life, and vigour of those who are to be the future fathers and mothers of the millions of 'children yet unborn.'

"EDUCATION IN THE BLACK COUNTRY.

"At the last meeting of the Wednesbury School Board the chairman drew attention to the difficulty experienced in carrying out the provisions of the Education Act, owing to the imperfect enforcement of the law relating to the employment of children in small workshops. This difficulty is felt more or less throughout the South Staffordshire district, where, owing to the very large number of little workshops, adequate inspection by the present staff of officials is altogether impracticable. So long as the enforcement of the Workshops Regulation Act is so partial, its provisions will continue to be, as now, very lightly regarded in South Staffordshire, for in the domiciliary haunts of labour which abound in that district children are with impunity at work at the anvil or the vice who ought to be receiving elementary instruction at a Board school. This inadequate supervision operates very unfairly against such of the 'little masters' as are honest enough to obey the law without compulsion, and it is a serious obstruction to the work of education in the Black Country.

"So with the Factory Act proper. For example, I find from the Blue Book that in the Bolton and Blackburn district, with nearly 3,000 factories and workshops to be visited, there is one solitary inspector! So with the brick-yards and brick-fields all over the country. I assert, sir, in the hearing of the reporters for the press, and well aware that my words shall go forth, that the Act of 1871-2 is now very much a dead letter. Within the past few weeks I have seen with these eyes dots of children employed in brick-making precisely as before the Act; and so it is every-

where. More, sir; brought to the knowledge of the inspectors—I speak of one case known to myself—the law-breakers were let off without one syllable of reprimand or one shilling of fine. I cannot wonder that masters and men alike get demoralised in conscience in this thing when the guardians of the law are so slack, so little alive to duty.

“Again, sir, I have many proofs that this class of men who have been appointed to the inspection of the brick-yards and brick-fields, are not of the stamp of men demanded for such work. Their book-learning (as the phrase runs) may be all in apple pie order; but, like that luckless Scotch gardener who so worried Dr. Hooker and Mr. Ayrton both, they are mere theorists, and really don’t know the kind of men or the kind of work they have to inspect; and, above all, are sorrowfully ignorant of the kind of evils against which they have to watch, and the wrongs from which child labour must be protected. These inspectors, in their kid-glove niceness and complaisance to employers of labour who astutely hob-nob with them, are the laughing stock of masters and men. Sir, it needs full knowledge, keen insight, quick penetrativeness, sagacious vigilance, and practical experience of the ways, and tricks, and usages of trade in the potteries, effectively to carry out this law, or any law that, like it, takes to do with long-rooted evils; and a class of men whom usage has made hardened to the wickedness of child labour, and self-satisfied in the every day sight of immoralities and scandals that moved to honest indignation the warm heart of Elihu Burritt of America, and which if reported of any country save our own would kindle the nation into wrath. Sir, to carry out the Act of 1871-2 in its integrity, there must be in certain great centres inspectors who practically know the brick-yards and brick-fields, and the things to be suspected and the classes to be dealt with—men who, while respectful to employers of labour, will neither be their toadies, their tools, nor their dupes—men whose supreme endeavour and end will be, not to make things pleasant, so as that such gentlemanly inspectors shall be “preferred” by employers (as if, God help me! the Act were in the interests of employers only, and not for the interests of the children)—but to right an enormous wrong, and to place the shield of the law between the little children and those who would misuse them, be these their

own parents, or employers greedy to utilise them, unheeding of results to individuals or to the nation. Systematic, not spasmodic—efficient, not formal—inspection is what the law demands, and what we must have. Moreover, the inspectors ought to be men capable of discerning where and how the law is broken, where there is connivance in law-breaking between employers and parents, and between parents and their children, not to be dependent on secret or furtive information, which is apt to breed bad blood and otherwise do damage. Emphatically, inspectors ought to be men not afraid of the grime and dirt and disagreeables of genuine inspection. From the nature of the labour to be inspected, there is not a little that your superfine young gentleman will be tempted to slur over and shun. Inspectors, too, ought to be men not to be imposed upon by alleged necessities of ‘season’ trades. The law prohibits child labour, and insists on restriction of hours of labour, and whatever child labour did, older labour, or labour allowed by the law, can and ought to do. The granting of ‘season work,’ which in bare and disgraceful fact means fourteen hours a day of work, exacted from mere children, I cannot too strongly condemn. What is the use of an Act, if it is not to be enforced where the need is most urgent, and the wrong the most flagrant?

“I have thus, with necessary brevity, touched on the main faults that strike me in relation to the carrying out of the Act of 1871-2. I trust—nay, I am confident—matters won’t be suffered to rest where they now are, or as they now are. With half-a-dozen men like Robert Baker, Esq., C.B., the Act would be a blessed reality for the children of England, and so for England. Let such men have thoroughly disciplined assistants under their authority, and the whole well assigned and distributed, with adequate arrangements, and very soon the breath of society would be sweetened, and soon the notion would come to look back on evils so long permitted with the same incredulity with which the bad monopolies are now regarded.

“In conclusion, sir, I have said the Act would be a blessed reality for the children. It would, emphatically; and I apprehend England has received loud warning from France of the waste and ruin, as well as the degradation and wrong, involved in just such child-labour as the Act of 1871-2 pro-

hibits. I know not that I can better close this paper than with a few weighty sentences about

“THE LABOUR OF CHILDREN IN FRANCE.

“While we in England are occupied in giving the finishing touches to the long course of legislation by which juveniles and female labour has been protected, our French neighbours are only beginning seriously to deal with the subject. No doubt the question has been often discussed and even legislated upon by the French Chambers. It is fully thirty years since the State set itself to grapple with the difficulty in France. But as it was thirty years from the time the father of the late Sir Robert Peel introduced a bill to protect the health and morals of apprentices of both sexes to the enactment of the first group of effective legislative measures on the subject promoted by Lord Ashley and others, a like period has elapsed since a beginning, which yet waits to be completed, was made in the legislation of our French neighbours. The law passed on the 22nd of March, 1841, is still in force, and has doubtless been of considerable use and value. But it only needs a glance at the statistics of the industrial and agricultural populations in connection with the conscription to show the striking inferiority of the physique of the former—an inferiority which is to a very large degree due to the condition of their labour, especially that of boys. Out of 325,000 youths who presented themselves in one year no fewer than 109,000 were rejected, owing to feebleness of constitution, deficient height, or other physical causes. Now compare the country and the town youths. As against 10,000 conscripts fit for service in ten agricultural departments the proportion of the incapacitated was 4,029. The same number of conscripts in ten industrial departments had as their attendant proportion 9,930 incapable. In some other departments, such as Marne, the Seine-Inférieure, and the Eure, which are strictly manufacturing, to get 10,000 conscripts fit for service there had to be rejected as unfit 14,451. We agree with M. d'Eichthal, in the current number of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, where he says that facts like these bear too intimately upon the political and

social future of the country to allow the State to be indifferent to them. Whatever difficulties may be felt in regard to the liberty of the subject, the authority of parents, freedom of industry, and the like, must be met or got rid of somehow if France is not to lose the sap and vigour of her manhood, and see herself hopelessly out-distanced in the race of civilisation. We have long ago come to the conclusion that laziness will not help in such matters. Indeed, our danger rather is now of going an opposite extreme. The principle that the law should observe a distinction between juvenile and female labour and the labour of grown-up men, though angrily denounced when proclaimed by Wilberforce half a century ago, has become axiomatic among us. That principle, however, still waits its full recognition and practical application in France. France is in this respect not only behind England, but behind Germany, and some of our European countries. The North German Confederation passed a law in 1869 which goes even further than our own legislation on the subject, and altogether prohibits the employment of any children under twelve years of age in manufactories; and the maximum day is six hours till fourteen, and ten till sixteen. In Austria, Sweden, and Switzerland, the age of admission in some branches of industry is regulated by law, and put at thirteen and even fourteen years.

“And now, Mr. President and gentlemen, I sit down, after expressing a hope that if I have spoken strongly you will understand it is because I feel strongly, yet righteously, the wickedness of any attempt at cutting the sinews of such an Act as this of 1871-2; and I trust I may also be permitted to entreat this Association to give out a ‘certain sound’ on this momentous matter, and that the members, in their several places, and by their several influences, will seek to preserve the Act in its integrity.

“Each wavelet helps in ebb or flow,
Each rain-drop makes some flower to blow,
Each struggle lessens human woe.

“‘God defend the right.’”

EVIDENCE BEFORE THE COMMISSIONERS.

The reading of my paper caused quite a flutter among the brick and tile-making communities, and the Government began to think that it was time the question of "ornamental tiles" and "plain tiles" was settled at once and for ever. The education and welfare of 80,000 children of both sexes was not to be trifled with any longer. Consequently Captain May, the Sub-Inspector for the Potteries district, was directed by the Home Secretary to take a case before the magistrates in the district, for they would be more likely to know, some of them being manufacturers, and to have it fairly tried and tested; this was done in the case of one of the manufactories at Basford Bank; and in the meantime, I had sent samples of quarries, or "plain tiles" and ornamental tiles, mosaic and encaustic tiles to the Home Office, for Mr. Bruce to judge for himself. The result was, after the case had been heard three times with some sharp fighting before the magistrate at Hanley, Mr. Peake, Mr. Evans, and the North Staffordshire Brick and Tile-makers Association lost the case, rightly and justly so, for which I thank God from the bottom of my heart, for if they had won, and all the works of the kind placed under the Act of 1864, the consequences would have been fatal to the brick-yard clause in the Act of 1871. For under the Act of 1864 children of both sexes could be sent to work upon the hot flues, ovens, &c., as early as eight years of age.

Under the 1871 Act no child can be employed under 10, and upon half time only between 10 and 13, and no female under 16. I arrived at Hanley just in time on the third day to hear the decision given against them, and to see the enemies of the children thoroughly routed and discomfited again, but, unfortunately not slain. After resigning themselves to their fate nearly two years, occasionally they would burst out in rage and fury with the poison of a serpent upon their tongue, to which I would reply through the press and other ways. They knew that the Royal Factory and Workshops

Acts Commission would sit at Hanley after sitting at Leicester, before whom I gave evidence as to the manufacture of "plain tiles" and "ornamental tiles," and also with reference to the condition of the women and children living and working upon canal boats, to take evidence upon various points to making the factory laws.

From some cause or another it struck me very forcibly that Mr. Peake, his men, and the North Staffordshire Brick and Tile-makers Association would be rallying their forces to make another grand and desperate effort to regain the ground they lost before the magistrates. So to be prepared, and adopting the old proverb, "to be forewarned is to be forearmed," I hasted off to the Queen's Hotel, Hanley, where the Commission was sitting, and where I stayed for the night. The next morning about seven o'clock I went to a builder's yard and bought a blue brick, garden-tile, dust brick, 6 inch quarry, a roof tile, made out of the ordinary brick clay found in the neighbourhood, and an "ornamental tile" made at an earthenware factory, and took them into the room where the Commission would meet at nine o'clock, and placed them upon the chimney-piece for the Commissioners to see for themselves. A few minutes to nine o'clock Sir James Fergusson, Bart., the chairman, Lord F. Cavendish, the vice-chairman, Sir George Young, Bart., the secretary, Lord Balfour of Burleigh, and the other Commissioners came into the room. I then took the opportunity of explaining the difference between the two kinds, after which I sat down. Immediately I had done so, I learned that Mr. Peake was to be the first to give evidence that morning.

The preliminary over Mr. Peake was ushered into the room, and at once, with a little flurry and confusion, began to answer the questions of the chairman, secretary, and other commissioners. Mr. Peake, in order to throw dust into the eyes of the commissioners had had some of the quarries, "plain tiles, garden tiles, roof tiles, &c., got up 'extra fine.'" The clay ground finer, made truer, and polished. Those goods,

guise of philanthropy. Mr. George Smith in one of his books had made gross charges against his (Mr. Peake's) works.—The chairman : But there was ample opportunity of refuting them in the public press ?—Mr. Peake : Not equal opportunities as those accorded to the accuser. The charges which Mr. Smith made were utterly denied to be true, as far as they regarded the brick and tile manufactures of North Staffordshire. The chairman : Before this Commission, Mr. Smith has made no charges against you or any other employer ; and to prove this he read Mr. Smith's evidence given at Leicester.—Mr. Peake said that what the brick and tile manufacturers desired was that the trade should be placed under the Act of 1864, giving them the power to employ children. The morality and health of the *employés* in the trade were not at all exceptionally bad, but on the contrary very good. In proof of this, the witness read testimonials from Dr. Arlidge, the Rev. Sir Lovelace Stamer, and a Tunstall schoolmaster. Sir Lovelace said that between the employment of females in brick and tile manufactories and their employment in china works, the difference was not such as to justify exceptional legislation. Mr. Peake rebutted the charge of brick and tile making damaging the intellect. To Mr. Brand : They sold the few common bricks which they fired at the bottom of the oven. It would be better to make a regulation with regard, not to the mere fact of sale, but to the quantity of common bricks manufactured.—To Lord F. Cavendish : They would have no objection to girls under 16 years of age being prohibited from carrying common bricks. It would be the ruin of the trade entirely, if it were not placed under the Act of 1864.—We have taken the above report of the proceedings from a Staffordshire daily paper, and assume that it conveys a fair account of what took place. As to Mr. Smith's action in the agitation which was the means of bringing about the Act of 1871 (known as the Brick-fields Act), those who have read his '*Cry of the Brick-field Children*' cannot but come to the conclusion that such an Act was imperatively needed in the interests of our common humanity. The question urged before the Commission by Mr. Peake was that the particular trade he and others were engaged in would be seriously damaged if they were to continue under the provisions of the 1871 Act, instead of being allowed to

come under the Act of 1864. This latter Act is applicable to the pottery trade generally, and to the manufacturers of ornamental and encaustic tiles, such as Messrs. Minton, Hollins, and Co., Messrs. Maw, Messrs. Malkin, Edge, and Co., Mr. Godwin, Messrs. Bathurst, and others; and children of eight years old (boys and girls) are allowed to work in the trade, under the usual conditions. The 1871 Act is applicable to all brick-fields and to the manufactories of plain tiles (or quarries, as they are called). When the Act of 1864 was being put into force, it is understood that Mr. Peake contended that the tiles or quarries he manufactured were not ornamental. Upon the 1871 Act coming into force he endeavoured to show that these very tiles were ornamental. Now there is a vast difference between what are known as the 'plain' and those denominated 'ornamental' tiles. Under the head of the former term are included quarries (ranging in size from 14in. to 18in. square), ridge tiles, roof tiles, garden tiles, and all kinds of building, coping, and paving bricks. The clay used in their manufacture is obtained direct from the 'face' or earth, and is in every respect treated as ordinary clay for bricks,—of course some of it being ground a little finer than it would be for rough, common bricks. They are burnt in ordinary kilns or ovens. Sometimes, as in the case of bricks, a better quality is produced by pressing. The price of these plain tiles or quarries varies from 1s. to 2s. per yard. Under the name of 'ornamental' tiles are included encaustic, mosaic, printed, painted, bath, and glazed tiles, and all kinds of earthenware. In the manufacture of these tiles the clay has to be sifted, slipped, stained, and dried. In burning they are placed in 'saggars,' like earthenware, and in the same kind of kilns. They are sold at prices varying from 4s. to 20s. per square yard. It is, therefore, clear that there is a vast difference between plain and ornamental tiles. Such being the case, it seems scarcely likely that the Commission will report in favour of any change in the carrying out of the Act of 1871, which was obtained with so much labour, and after so much opposition from vested interests. Were Mr. Peake's desire to have all such factories as his own placed under the 1864 Act carried out it would have the effect, ultimately, of bringing nearly every brick-yard in the kingdom under it, and the ends and aims of the promoters

of the Act of 1871 would be entirely defeated. We do not anticipate, however, any such retrograde legislation, but the attempt made before the Commission pretty clearly indicates the course of action which some brick and tile-makers would be only too glad to take."

The action of the "opposition" in this matter all through the whole course of the proceeding reminds me of a story I once heard related, when a boy, at a large annual gathering of scholars, teachers, and other friends in the Wesleyan Sunday School, Tunstall, by a gentleman from Kidsgrave, and which was as follows:—One dark night when the thunder was roaring, lightning flashing, storm fearful, sea rough, an emigrant ship laden with precious souls was ploughing its way through waves mountains high; the captain, who, by the way, as is the case with nearly all sailors and boatmen, was rather superstitious, but nevertheless a good man, imagined he heard a low rumbling voice somehow and somewhere overhead, which to his mind foreboded no good to the vessel. "It blows hard!" "It blows hard!" "It blows hard!" This strange and mysterious voice could be heard between the peals of thunder during the whole of the night, but it could not be seen from whence it came. The captain and all on board were much concerned about the safety of the vessel, and expecting every minute in answer to the strange voice, to be dashed upon the rocks, souls lost, and the ship a wreck; but thank God, to the astonishment of everybody on board, the voice which the captain at times thought was the voice of God, daylight proved to be that of a parrot which had been in the rigging all night. The parrot was "caged" and the ship with its freight of priceless souls arrived at the end of its voyage in peace and safety. With the exception of a modification of clause 2 and the omission of clause 7, see page 73 of old edition, the other clauses form the basis or ground work of the Act as it now stands. With reference to clause 2 if inspectors can be found who will faithfully do their duty and carry out the Act of Parliament



COAL AND IRONSTONE DUST SIFTING.

in its present form and integrity, and decided by the law courts, Royal Factory and Workshops Acts, commissioners, public opinion, and the common sense of the country, the employment of women would soon turn into other channels more in accordance with their nature, capabilities tastes, desires, suitability, object and life, rather than in the unfeminine occupation and demoralizing influences of the "dust holes," "hot flues," "hot kilns," "smoking ovens," "ladder climbing," "clay holes," and the sickening, filthy, disgusting and blood-curdling conversation of the Brick-field and brick and tile-yards which is nearly equal to that among canal boats and canal boatmen." As regards clause 7, with the amount of experience I have had since 1872, the year the Act came into operation, the fair and open field upon which the inspectors appointed by the Government could have brought their education, influence, position, opportunities and talents to bear, I say (of course there are many good men among them who deserve well the position they hold) and I would say it with ten thousand voices if I had them, that they have not produced the good among the brick and tile-yards and brick-fields expected of them, they have not brought about the improvement among the juvenile workers sought for, and they have not secured the results desired at their hands to anything like the extent for which they receive the country's pay, the amount being nearly £30,000 per year paid for factory inspection. To-day girls are to be seen working at brick and tile-yards with the winking at and hob-nobbing kind of sanction of the inspector. I know of a number of large brick and tile-works—although the act has been in operation over seven years—upon which an inspector has not set his foot, nor is there a notice to be seen. At the entrance of some yards are to be seen notices hung up in accordance with the law, but which notices are, it would appear, by the action of the inspector and employers, treated as waste paper, set at nought and counted as nothing. On my taking the oversight, for a time, of a

large brickworks, near Chesterfield, as engineer, so late as 1877, I found women and girls employed, barefooted and half naked, running about upon hot flues, and at all hours, and this in the face of the Act of 1877, with nothing to show that the sub-inspector, residing in the neighbourhood, had even heard of the place. The result was I sent the women and girls home to more suitable employment, which they readily found, and the bricks were made for 1/- per 1,000 less than before, and better in quality.

A very large brick and tile-works, near Sheffield, has been in operation for many years, upon which, when I went there in 1877, no inspector had set his foot, nor were there any notices to be seen. These works the inspector might have seen from his own door.

With the amount expended for factory inspection and the proper carrying out of the law, how long will this state of things be allowed to continue? Echo answers "Not so long as inspectors are appointed to such posts more on account of their family relation than in their fitness, mental and moral worth, and knowledge of the duties."

The end of the Royal Commissioners' inquiry was to the effect, that they recommended in their report, that no change should be made in the existing law, as decided by the magistrates and the Home Secretary, which was in accordance with my suggestions, with reference to the manufacture of "plain tiles," quarries, etc., not being considered "ornamental tiles" according to the true intent and meaning of the Act. Those recommendations were carried out in the "Factory Consolidation Act" of last year by the Right Hon. R. A. Cross, the Home Secretary; and thus at least the subject is finally and for ever settled in a manner from which there is no appeal, for which on behalf of my little clients, I take the present opportunity of thanking him from the bottom of my heart. Before much longer these parties who have imagined that their "toes would be pinched," and as stated to me more than once, that "it would ruin the trade

entirely, if it were not placed under the Act of 1864" will be agreed that the right and proper course has been taken, not only in the case of the men and masters—which was clearly shown before the commissioners—but also in that of the women and children whose happiness and welfare has been my sole object all through the death-like struggle.

The Brick and tile-makers—men and masters—being silenced, their objections overruled, and their vehement and violent opposition of no avail ; and fruitless so far as they were concerned, my wish, anxiety, and object, has been to expose the wrong doing of certain sub-inspectors in not carrying out the Act properly, faithfully and loyally ; and with this view in mind I read a paper at the Social Science Congress held at Liverpool in 1876 on the

INSPECTION OF BRICK AND TILE YARDS AND CANAL BOATS.

As the second part of my paper relating to the inspection canal boats was given in my last edition of "Our Canal Population,"* I purpose giving here only this part relating to the Inspection of brick and tile yards and is as follows :—

If there is anything in this world that will undermine the foundations of any family, institutions, Church or State, and prevent our Factory and Workshops Act being properly respected, observed and upheld, it is disorder, confusion, and laxity ; and this is apparent, to a large extent, in the way the Brick-fields Act of 1871 is being carried out. How could it be otherwise, when we take into consideration that the inspectors, by the passing of the Act, had, in addition to their other duties, of visiting 100,000 factories and workshops, some 4,000 or 5,000 brick and tile-yards, on which

* Haughton and Co., 10, Paternoster Row. 3s. 6d.

are employed nearly 20,000 men and women, and the same number of children and young persons to look after? Many of these yards—as mostly the case with brick-yards—are up to the knees in mud and clay and miles away in the country, and far away from any railway station.

Inspectors, like other men, have their likes and dislikes, and would naturally prefer visiting those works the cleanest and nearest their headquarters, so as to show the largest amount of work done in the least given time. Then, again, it is said the *employés* at brick and tile-yards are not the most polite, civil, and respectable in the world, and I can readily understand that an inspector would rather “go a mile another way” than face a brick and tile-yard. Nevertheless, one of the best Acts that was ever placed upon the statute book, viz., the Brickfields Act of 1871, has been passed, and no female under 16 and no child under 10 or between 10 and 13 unless, upon half-time, can be lawfully employed in making bricks and tiles, not being ornamental tiles. It has been estimated that 10,000 children were sent out of yards on January 1, 1872, to home or school to be educated.

It is quite time something was done to improve our system of factory inspection. The Royal Commissioners did not begin one minute too soon. I have visited brick and tile-works and potteries in various parts of the country over and over again, and especially during the last few weeks, which have been in operation for years, and an inspector had not, at the time of my visit, set his foot upon the place, nor had any papers been sent to the employers informing them that they were under the Act. When I questioned one man as to whether an inspector had been to the works at which he was working, his answer was, “We don’t want an inspector to come to our works as we don’t use machinery, we grind our clay with a horse.” So, throughout, the same or a similar tale is told a hundred times over—men, women, and children working on the same works as they did years ago. On a number of works they have an idea that a law has been passed, and that I am at the bottom of all the mischief, and the girls and children get out of my way, as fast as possible, to prevent me seeing them, and the masters resort to language not the most refined.

I find, as a rule, it is the selfish employers and not so much

the men that are opposed to the Act. For the life of me I cannot see the reason, for in taking the whole country through, making bricks, tiles, &c., does not cost the employers one penny per 1,000 more than it did before the Act was passed, at least, so far as regards the children, and this fact was brought out in evidence before the Commissioners, and appears in their report. If the children are older and get more wages they do more work without doubt; in fact, the brick and tile makers are receiving from 7s. to 8s. per 1,000 more now for their goods than before the passing of the Act, out of which 1d. goes to the children, 10d. or 1s. to the men, and the remainder between the colliery owner and the brickmaker. In many cases the cry raised about the hardships of prohibiting the employment of children and girls in making bricks, tiles, and at collieries and iron-works, is only to throw dust into the eyes of the public and make the Commissioners believe "the moon is made of green cheese." The Brick-fields Act has been a peg upon which to hang all sorts of complaints such as high prices, scarcity of labour, and a host of other things which, when looked at, will not bear the light of day.

I see from the Commissioner's Reports, some of the sub-inspectors have allowed children to be worked for 14 hours per day in making bricks and tiles. I say emphatically, that the official who allows it, has neither the interests of the children nor the welfare of the nation at heart.

Great objection has been raised as to the scarcity of children. If this were really the case, there would be more children upon half-time than there are. The Act did not lessen the number of children, it only sent them to school for a time. If the Act had been properly carried out at the commencement, the difficulty—if any—would long before this have been removed. If, after the passing of the Act, the whole of the machinery had been set in motion at once by first sending a short plain circular, with an abstract of the Act with the pains and penalties attached, to each works, and then to have been followed by an inspector, whose object for the first visit or two should have been to instruct and not to prosecute, the inspector to have been assisted by a number of thoroughly respectable and practical men, as stated in my paper laid before this Congress at Newcastle in

1869, and in my "Cry of the Children from the Brick-yards of England," page 5, in which the Royal Commission and many of the inspectors agree ; for there are respectable and practical men to be found lower down in the social scale as well as there are in the higher circles of social life ; the imaginary difficulties brought to the surface by those, whose object is to "make mountains out of mole-hills," would have been removed, and we should long before this have had the whole thing running smoothly.

Notwithstanding all the hard things that have been heaped on my head, it is pleasing to see the vast improvement among the men, women, and children at brick and tile-yards. The Brick-fields Act, if wisely enforced, lessens the amount of drunkenness so prevalent—sorry to say—among brick-yard *employés*. From half a gallon to a gallon of beer per day will be a fair average for each man. A large works with which I was connected for 14 years carried out, as nearly as possible, the Act as it now stands, during the whole of the time, and the result is that I have not seen one dozen cases of drunkenness among the men. They go to their work on Mondays as on other days ; and all the children can read and write. During the last twelve years, in the neighbourhood where I reside, some very large brick-field works have sprung up—about 40 kilns—and owing to the large collieries in the vicinity, boys command high wages, and female labour is cheap : and the bricks and tiles are made by hand : with these difficulties to contend with, bricks and tiles are made better and cheaper than in those districts where females are employed, and the Act not strictly carried out. A few weeks since a large colliery owner, a brickmaker, and a thoroughly practical man, told me that his experience was that it was cheaper to employ boys at 13 than it was at 12 ; generally speaking, a boy of 13 would do the work of two at 11 or 12.

Some of the inspectors have done their duties well, as far as they were able, at the same time there are those among them who, if they thoroughly and practically understood their duties better, we should have had less complaints about the Act. An inspector stated before the Commissioners that there was but little difference between the manufacture of bricks and earthenware. Surely, he could not have seen either bricks or earthenware made, or he would not have

uttered that statement. If an inspector, whose duty it is to carry out the Act, raises quibbles, we may expect those who object to the Acts, or any Act, to throw obstacles in the way of the inspectors. Some employers, who might have lived a century ago, have been trying to draw the feather over the eyes of the Commissioners and inspectors by stating that there is no difference in the manufacture of quarries, ridge tiles, floor tiles, encaustic and ornamental tiles, and there are others who stated that making fire-bricks was much lighter work than making common bricks; happily, the Commissioners, after personally visiting the works and patient inquiry, with deep insight and quickness of perception, saw through the whole plot themselves; and thankful to say they do not recommend any alterations in the present Brick-field Acts, except as to times of working the sheds. This is a complete answer to those of my enemies who have been slandering me for years with their poisonous breath, for the plain and unpolished statements made in my "Cry of the Children from the Brick-yards of England."

Then as to the appointment of "gentlemen" as inspectors, as recommended by one or two inspectors before the Commissioners; and in a leading article in a daily paper recently. I do not know what they mean by "gentlemen." I have found gentlemen, according to my idea, among the middle classes of society, as well as the upper, and better qualified to carry out Acts of Parliament than many of those now appointed. There is a thorough feeling among the working-class in favour of law and order, and it is not necessary for a gentleman to drive into a brick-yard with a carriage and pair in order to impress the working-man with an idea of the majesty of law and of the Factory Acts. Gentlemen can be found well educated, well dressed, and above bribes at a comparatively small salary, who would as soon be obeyed in a brick and tile-yard, as if they were dressed in "scarlet and fine linen." To be armed with the Queen's authority gives an inspector all the influence he needs for brick and tile-yards, collieries, iron-works, and similar places. If "gentlemen" are the best inspectors, why not employ them as police officers, School Board inspectors, parish officers, warders, and in a host of other ways, and have half the number at double their present salaries? My idea of an inspector is one that will make the most visits, and carry out the Act

thoroughly with the least amount of annoyance and number of prosecutions.*

An inspector stated before the Commission that he has 10,000 factories and workshops in his district, and he has only been able to visit 4,000. A few of the Mr. Sub-Inspectors, "respectable busy-bodies overflowing with philanthropic zeal," are wanted here. But few things have done more to cause annoyance to both parents and employers than the "piecemeal hit or miss" kind of inspection that has been going on for so long. They say, and with some reason, "We should not mind if the inspector came to all places alike; we don't like this making fish of one and flesh of another." I shall be sorry if our sub-inspectors by this uneven action should throw into the cup that portion that will make our Factory and Workshops Acts distasteful and unpopular to the working and other classes of this country. It would be an encouragement to those who do well, and a terror to those who do evil, if the inspector would enter his visit in the register the same as the certifying surgeon, with remarks as to the state of the children, &c. It would save a vast amount of trouble if all the brick and tile-works were registered; this could be done by the registrar of births and deaths as he travels through the country places, &c. The

* **THE FACTORY AND WORKSHOPS ACTS.—DEPUTATION TO GOVERNMENT.**—On November 18, 1878, a representative deputation from the Trade Union Congress Parliamentary Committee, the Blackburn Weavers' Association, cardroom workers and spinners of South Lancashire, Oldham, Bolton, Preston, Over Darwen, and other towns in the North of England, had an interview with Sir Matthew Ridley, M.P., Mr. Alexander Redgrave, C.B., and Mr. R. S. Mitford (who received them on account of the unavoidable absence of the Home Secretary at the funeral of a relative), at the Home Office, to present a memorial praying for the appointment of additional sub-inspectors under this Act. The deputation consisted of Messrs. J. Burnett, G. Shipton, T. Birtwistle, H. Broadhurst, of the Trade Union Congress Parliamentary Committee; J. Whalley, Craven, Coking, T. Fenton, of Blackburn; T. Oldham, Stockport; T. Ashton, Oldham; J. Fielding, Bolton; A. Kenyon, Preston; and E. Entwistle, Over Darwen. They were briefly introduced by Mr. Pennington, M.P.

Mr. H. Broadhurst said the Trade Union Congress had had before them for years the subject of an increase in the number of sub-inspectors of factories and workshops. They had waited before bringing their complaints before the Government until now, when

inspector would know of their existence and locality without waiting to hear by chance of them. The certifying surgeon should visit all factories and workshops; but in factories and workshops employing under 20 hands his visits should be monthly instead of fortnightly.

It will never do at this time of day for any man, or number of men, to seek to upset Acts of Parliament and employ children of tender age and females under 16 in such heavy and unfeminine occupations as making bricks, tiles, and at collieries, iron-works, salt-works, and similar places. They who do these things seek to serve their own selfish ends and care nothing for the health and education of the children, the chastity of the women, and the comfortable and happy homes for our artizans and the welfare of the nation; they are worse than infidels and heathens, for they aim at destroying national life and moral virtue.

I now bring my book, with all its faults, to a close, and breathe a gentle prayer to Heaven for a Father's blessing to attend it on its mission. It may be that in making its way through the crowd some of those with whom it comes in contact may be stung to the quick, others their toes trod upon, and others hailing it with pleasant countenances and delight as it endeavours in its own way to rid the path of

the laws relating to factory and workshop inspection had been consolidated, and it was hoped the Government would meet the wants of the Congress to a considerable extent, if not wholly. He read the memorial of the deputation, which set forth that they looked forward to the various Acts passed from time to time for the better regulation of factories and workshops calculated to improve the physical and moral welfare of the workpeople; that whilst fully recognising the value of the new consolidated Act, they were anxious that it should be carried out both in spirit and letter, which they thought could be done better by increasing the number of sub-inspectors and assistant sub-inspectors, consisting of a number of practical working men and women acting under the direction and control of the superior inspector. It further pointed out that the area over which the present inspectors had to traverse was far too large, and the population much too dense for effectively carrying out the intention of the Act.

Mr. Thomas Birtwistle remarked that it had been found that the new Act, as far as the inspection department went, had not been observed so well of late as previously. It was from no fault of the inspectors. The Act was being violated by the employers of "half-timers," who got a great deal more labour out of them than

some of the hindrances to human progress as affecting girl-life and child-life in brick-yards. Be this as it may, I have tried to do my duty in exposing the evils of the system, and will leave the result in God's hand.

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of those little ones ye have done it unto me."

TO THE YOUNG I WOULD SAY:

"Aspire to greater things,
With heaven-exalted eye—
With steadfast tread, and bearing high,
And hope on joyful wings,
There's not a victory won below,
But points to other work undone;
And ever as Time's currents flow,
We find new shores still to be won.

"Press on with purpose pure,
Nor cast one look behind;
Ambitious still to store thy mind
With truthful love that shall endure.
There's not a height by man yet gain'd
But shows another height to win:
There's not a truth by man maintain'd,
But bears some greater truth within.

that for which they paid. It was found that many children went to work in the morning at six, they worked till breakfast time, and then went to school, and in the afternoon they came from school to go to the mills. The cases were so numerous that the present inspectors could not stop them. Overtime had become extremely prevalent. The workers would themselves give information, but they were afraid of being marked. In Blackburn, when an inspector went to do his duties in one mill the news of his arrival was sent all over the town. To meet the difficulty of any working man being known, he suggested that those appointed sub-inspectors should go about from town to town, and not be permanently located in any one. He suggested that there should be registering offices established, indicating more clearly than at present the residence of the inspector.

Mr. T. Aston, of Oldham, observed that the inspector of his town had Ashton-under-Lyne, Glossop, and many other places to look after. He was overworked. The Act was violated and evaded by both parties—masters and *employés*. There were boys and girls who went to work at six in the morning and never left the mills till about a quarter to six in the evening, while half-timers worked on Saturday. The inspector knew of this, but he was powerless, owing to the great distances he had to travel.



PUNCHING OUT THE FIRE-HOLES.

1

“ Oh, seek the good and great !
Man's mission on the earth
Is progress ever, from his birth ;
Nor should he e'er in zeal abate.
Oh ! who would, tamely lingering, see
Such boundless prospects for the mind,
And, clinging to mortality,
In guilty sloth be left behind ?

“ Aspire to better deeds,
With hope and love entwined
Let emulation fill thy mind,
And ever haste when duty leads.
Man's holy mind, if trained aright
To such a height of good would grow,
That spirits pure and angels bright
Might with us mingle here below.”

Part IV.

What the World and Friends say of my Work.

IT is with much reluctance I have yielded to the wish of many personal friends to add at the end of this book, which they say ought to be done in the interest of my own little ones at home, the following flattering allusions and compliments bestowed upon me for the success which has attended my single-handed and feeble efforts for the benefit of others. I feel I do not deserve a tithe of what they say. I have only been a poor weak instrument in the hands of God in the matter, and to Him the praise belongs. The following article, with reference to a presentation which took place, and I had the honour to receive, is taken from the *Builders' Weekly Reporter*, April 4, 1873. Notices of the presentation were inserted in the *Times*, *Daily News*, and nearly all other papers in the country :—

“PRESENTATION TO THE BRICK-FIELD CHILDREN'S ADVOCATE.

“A VERY interesting ceremony took place at noon on Saturday last, in the large room of the Social Science Association, 1, Adam Street, Adelphi, London, under the presidency of the Earl of Shaftesbury, K.G., and in the presence of Lord John Manners, M.P., and Lady Manners; Robert Baker, Esq., C.B., H.M. Inspector of Factories; P.W. Clayden, Esq., and Miss Clayden; Mr. and Mrs. John Plummer, the Rev. S. Antliff, Edward Walford, Esq., M.A., Mr. T. Blower, Mr. Herbert Johnson, Mr. John Lloyd (Secretary to the Committee), Mrs. and the Misses Lloyd, and a numerous assembly. The occasion was the presentation of a testi-

monial to Mr. George Smith, F.S.A., of Coalville, Leicestershire, in recognition of the great services he had rendered in inducing the Legislature to place the whole of the brick-fields and tile-yards of the country under the provisions of the Factory Act, whereby many of the hardships formerly suffered by the young of both sexes were greatly lessened, and at the same time the age at which children could be put to work in these places very materially raised. We have upon many occasions pointed out the value and importance of Mr. Smith's services, and we need not, therefore, dwell upon them now. A few of his friends thought the opportunity of testifying to the worth of these services should not be overlooked, and through their exertions a fund was raised sufficient to present to Mr. Smith a handsomely-bound family Bible, a complimentary address on vellum, beautifully illuminated and framed, and a purse of £100; and to Mrs. Smith a valuable silver teapot, from the well-known establishment of Mr. Stephen Smith, of King Street, Covent Garden. The address, of which the following is a copy, bore the signatures of the Duke of Rutland, K.G., the Earl of Shaftesbury, K.G., the Dowager Marchioness of Westminster, the Lady Theodora Grosvenor, Earl Fortescue, Lord John Manners, M.P., Sir George H. Beaumont, Bart., the Right Hon. H. A. Bruce, M.P. (Home Secretary), S. W. Clowes, Esq., M.P., W. U. Heygate, Esq., M.P., John Walters, Esq., M.P., A. J. Mundella, Esq., M.P., M. A. Bass, Esq., M.P., J. Dove Harris, Esq., M.P., P. A. Taylor, Esq., M.P., T. T. Paget, Esq., Humberstone, Leicester; Robert Baker, Esq., C.B., H.M. Inspector of Factories; the Rev. Charles Kingsley, Canon of Westminster; E. S. Ellis, Esq., Chairman of the Midland Railway Company; 'Cuthbert Bede,' B.A. (Rev. E. Bradley); the Rev. Dr. Grosart; and other members of the Committee.

*"To Mr. George Smith, F.S.A., of Coalville, Leicestershire, the
Brick-field Children's Advocate.*

"Dear Sir,—We, whose names are here appended, on behalf of a numerous body of subscribers, desire to express the admiration and gratitude felt by us, both individually and collectively, for your persevering and successful exertions on behalf of the poor children employed in the brick-fields of this kingdom. Having

learnt from early and practical experience the great amount of social and moral degradation to which children of either sex had been long subjected in the labour of the brick-fields, on reaching an independent position through your own exertions, you resolved to do your best to emancipate the English child from a slavery almost as degrading as that of Asia or Africa. In bringing about this result, almost single handed, you have succeeded in awakening the consciences of our legislators to the existence of a frightful evil, and at length you had the satisfaction of seeing this evil largely ameliorated by legislative enactment, in the extension of the principle of the Factory Act to all the brick-fields in the kingdom. As a slight recognition of this public service, to which you have devoted time, labour, and money, we beg herewith to present you with a purse of money, and along with it a piece of silver, which we trust may serve to commemorate for many years in your family the good and philanthropic work with which your name will be publicly connected. Heartily rejoicing in an opportunity to set our seal on such honourable labours, we are, &c."

"Upon the Earl of Shaftesbury taking the chair, the hon. secretary, Mr. E. Walford, M.A., read letters of apology for non-attendance from Earl Fortescue, Archdeacon Fearon, T. T. Paget, Esq. (treasurer), W. U. Heygate, Esq., M.P., and W. Ward, Esq. The noble earl then presented the testimonial, as enumerated above, accompanying the same with a few appropriate observations.

"In replying, Mr. Smith said : My lord, ladies, and gentlemen, the poet has finely remarked that there are 'Thoughts too deep for tears,' he might have added, there are 'Tears too deep for words.' I feel that here ; and now emphatically, as Thomas Carlyle puts it, 'Silence is golden ; speech only silvern.' My heart is very strong, I confess, against wrong and opposition, high-seated wickedness, oppression, cruelties to the helpless ; in short, all those disgraceful ongoing, at brick-yards and brick-fields. I have manhood enough to bear up against all these, and to refuse to be held beaten ; but kindness, such as looks out of your eyes, and from the letters that have reached me, and the generous pecuniary offering that will so far help to mend a somewhat big hole made in my hard-won earnings, melt me down completely. From my inmost soul I thank you in my own name, and in behalf of the wife I love, and my little ones at home. Come what may in the future, to-day's proceedings must ever lie in the past as a sunny memory, to which I may have to revert when dark hours come again, and my spirit is like to

grow faint and weary; for, my lord and friends, I need hardly assure you that while 'Be thankful' is my motto, I do not intend to accept the other half of the saying, 'Rest.' There's a long eternity for that truest rest in divinest working, no doubt; and meanwhile, as Robert Burns says:

“ ‘Man’s inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn,’

So that I can scarcely anticipate a time when I shall be free to 'Rest,' to seek to do no more for the little ones of our country. So far as the brick-yard children are concerned, I have a strong conviction that, notwithstanding our success in the House of Commons and getting laws into the statute book, it still demands unsleeping vigilance and earnest reiteration of facts to secure for the children in integrity that protection which the national conscience recognises as a necessity, and its violation a scandal and a sorrow. God helping me, those brick and tile-makers, be they masters or men, who seek covertly to play fast and loose with the Act, shall not find it so easy as they imagine to ignore the deliberate decision of the Legislature. My eyes and ears will ever be on the alert to catch the law breakers, and, as the friend of the oppressed is over all, may He defend the right. One of the objects I had in writing my little book has been accomplished, viz., bringing all brick-yard children under Government inspection; the other remains to be done, viz., the consolidation of all the Factories and Workshops Acts, and placing them under two heads. All the light, clean, warm and dry trades, such as spinning, weaving, plaiting, millinery and the like, under the Factory Act. All the heavy kinds of work, such as brick-making, tile-making, iron-works, collieries mining, and agriculture under the Workshops Act. At present it is difficult to say under what Act an establishment is to be placed, for there are 30 Acts touching this question, and yet far from being satisfactory; something has to be done or undone in reference to these Acts nearly every session. I wish again, right cordially and gratefully, to thank those present and those absent, for all their kind words and acts, and now more than ever I ask that your thoughts and feelings and activity may be turned from the humble individual, George Smith, to the cause he represents. Remember the children. (Applause.)

“Lord John Manners, M.P., then proposed, That the thanks of the Committee and subscribers, and of this meeting, be given to the Right Hon. the Earl of Shaftesbury for presiding on the present occasion, and for according his influence and support to the movement, which has resulted in the ‘Smith Testimonial.’ In doing so he said he was the more pleased to assist at that presentation, in view of the fact that both he and Mr. Smith were Leicestershire men. (Hear hear.) It was a well deserved testimonial, and had been fitly presented by their noble chairman who, for thirty years past had been incessantly engaged in encountering and overcoming various ogres, and monsters of wrong, cruelty, fraud, and oppression. He might now be found under the banner of Mr. Plimsoll attacking an amphibious monster, with one foot on shore and one on sea, who was sacrificing yearly many thousands of valuable lives. As regarded the present matter he (the speaker) was certain, that from the hands of no man living would Mr. Smith sooner have received that testimonial than from the hands of their noble chairman, whose name was so justly endeared to all who took an interest in the welfare of society. (Cheers.) Long might the chairman’s life be spared for the benefit of the people. (Cheers.)

“The resolution was seconded by Mr. John Plummer, who said that he had watched Mr. Smith’s labours from the first, and in the course of his long experience, had never met a man more devoted to a cause.

“The resolution was enthusiastically carried.

“Earl Shaftesbury in replying said, it was exceedingly kind to pass a vote of thanks to him for performing so agreeable and simple a duty. He had watched Mr. Smith’s labours with the greatest admiration, and he was happy to say that those labours had been crowned with the most ample success. (Cheers.) He was glad that Lord John Manners had proposed the vote of thanks, because his lordship had had a great share in promoting the remedial measures of the past twenty or thirty years. They had still, however, much to do, for the great question of raising the masses socially, morally, and religiously, was yet in its infancy. In that contest they would want vigorous effort and determination, nor must they relax their efforts, or allow a reaction to set in, especially as regarded Mr. Plimsoll’s cause. (Cheers.) But,

on the contrary, to spare no effort to assist him in removing so foul a blot on the fair name of our country. They must persevere in their efforts, for so soon as one ogre was killed others arose. Who would have thought that whilst they were disposing of such evils as those so successfully battled against by Mr. Smith, one of the most gigantic evils of the day was about to be unmasked by Mr. Plimsoll. He trusted that the agitation would result in satisfying the country and giving protection to our gallant seamen. He observed with regret that many of the provisions of the Factories Acts were neglected and evaded, and he urged that the inspectors should be men having a practical knowledge of the subject, and not merely persons who could pass satisfactorily a competitive examination at Westminster. At one time he was in hopes that Mr. Smith would have enjoyed the full reward of his services by being appointed one of her Majesty's inspectors under the Workshops and Factories Acts. (Cheers.) For such a position he could conceive of no man more fitted by experience. But the higher powers had overruled it, and in place of appointing Mr. Smith to one of those posts, had given them to young men whose only qualification apparently was, that they could give correctly the names of the kings and queens of this country since the Norman conquest. (Laughter.) Men with a practical knowledge of the subject had been passed aside ; but, nevertheless, he hoped that the time would arrive when Mr. Smith would be at the head of a department in this country where he would be more thoroughly enabled to carry out his great mission. (Cheers.)

"The proceedings then terminated."

The following is an introductory letter to "Hanani," being the "Memoir of William Smith," by the Rev. Dr. Grosart:—

"TO

"MR. GEORGE SMITH, F.S.A.,

"COALVILLE, NEAR LEICESTER.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"Our chance meeting (if 'chance' it may be called) in London, a goodly number of years ago now, is one of my 'Sunny Memories' (as Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe calls hers). Ever since, I have watched and profoundly sympathised with your

great-hearted labours in behalf of the brick-yard children of our country. I have wept with you when you wept, and rejoiced in the joy of your success. All along I went with you, and emphatically in your noble indiscretions of resolve to tell out the dark facts, fearless of personal consequences, and unabashed by wealthy 'vested interests.' Discretion is so common, and so safe, and so poor a thing in such benignant tasks of love, that really indiscretion of the George Smith of Coalville and Plimsoll type, is welcome.

"Feeling thus towards you personally, I could not find it in my heart to say no to your earnest request and re-request that I would write a little Memoir and 'point the moral' of your good father's life. Here, then, you and those who revere his memory, have it. May it help to keep his name green a short time at least! May some hearts be reached by his example! May the lessons of his life be read sympathetically and be stimulus and reproof.

"*'Hanani'* of the title page, is explained by what is written in Nehemiah vii. 2: '*My brother Hanani.....He was a faithful man and feared God above many.*'

"I make no claim for your father of greatness, or such kind of remarkableness as marks men out from their fellows, intellectually and otherwise. But I do claim for him goodness of a very real and Christ-like type—such goodness as I think has a distinct and a very much needed message for many in pulpit and pews alike. And so I, a Presbyterian of old Scotland, have *made* 'leisure hours' in an over-busy life, to tell the humble story of a Primitive Methodist '*Local Preacher.*'

"I will only add that my best wish for Primitive Methodism as a Christian Church, for whose achievements I hold the denomination in grateful honour, is that many William Smiths may be raised up within her.

"With heartfelt sympathy with you in all your philanthropic labours for the children and for your new enterprise on behalf of the canal boatmen and their families, and fervent prayers that you may be as good, and true, and heaven sure a man as your departed father,

"I am, my dear Friend,

"Yours very faithfully,

"ALEXANDER B. GROSART.

"Park View, Blackburn, Lancashire,

"4th September, 1874."

The following is taken from the *Christian World*, February 7, 1879 :—

“ OUR CANAL POPULATION.

“ READERS of our newspapers and magazines are familiar with the name of Mr. George Smith, of Coalville, and have gathered some idea of the work he has been seeking to accomplish ; but the appearance of his work, ‘ Our Canal Population,’ published by Houghton and Co. (Price 8s. 6d.), and the coming into operation of the Canal Boats Act, may seem a fitting opportunity for reviewing the labours of this earnest philanthropist. Mr. George Smith first became known by drawing attention to the white slavery practised on children in the brick-yards and fields. By his persistent efforts he made known the hardships to which young children were exposed, the distances they had to walk with their heavy loads of clay, the state of ignorance and poverty in which they existed, until the scandal became too great to be any longer tolerated, and the Legislature stepped in and interfered. By the Brick-fields Act, passed in 1871, the condition of upwards of 30,000 children was vastly improved ; no children were allowed to be employed under ten years of age ; between ten and thirteen they could only work as half-timers, and no girls were permitted to work in the yards under sixteen years of age.

“ Having been mainly instrumental in getting this useful and beneficial piece of legislation passed, one might have supposed Mr. Smith would have been content ; but the condition of another, a larger, and a more neglected class in society, had given him anxiety, and he determined to turn his attention to the canal population. But here a difficulty stood in the way. As manager of an important business, his employer felt he could not do justice to himself and conduct an agitation at the same time, but offered him a considerable advance on an already liberal salary if he would give up the canal-boat people. It was a trying alternative ; but inspired, as Mr. Smith thinks, by a Divine leading, he renounced his situation, and with it all settled income for himself and family, and gave himself up with a singleness

and earnestness of purpose to the canal population. In an article on the subject in the February number of *Kind Words* Mr. Smith thus tells of his final resolve:—‘One night in 1872 (which night I shall never forget), a sea of upturned little, dirty, thin, pinched faces were before me, which had the picture of death, misery, destitution, destruction, and woe stamped upon their countenances crying, with piercing cries, “Come and help us, come and help us,” whose cries, wails and moans seem to ring in my ears to the present day. I then and there began to pull them, in my humble way, out of the cabins to get them to school, and shall continue to do so, I hope, till landed in heaven.’

“Few who have not had their attention called to the subject are aware that the network of canals reaches nearly to 5,000 miles; that there is a population of upwards of 70,000 children, and more than 20,000 adults afloat in some 25,000 boats. Hitherto this vast floating mass of population has been subject to no inspection or regulation, sanitary, educational, or otherwise, and so it has come to pass that there has been growing up in our midst a population reared in ignorance and neglect, and in defiance of all laws, human and Divine.

“Men and women, married and unmarried, have been living in cabins ‘scarcely the size of a gentleman’s dog kennel, into which are starved, stowed, or huddled together, man, woman, and six or seven children of both sexes, big and little, to live, sleep, and die in.’ What the children subject to such influences would be sure to turn out may well be imagined; without education of any sort the race must degenerate from bad to worse.

“But brighter days are, we trust, in store; thanks to ‘the Children’s Friend,’ as Mr. Smith has been appropriately called. In August, 1877, the Canal Boats Act was passed, which provides for the registration of canal boats, and which compels the boatmen to register themselves at some place, under the School Board authorities of which the children will henceforth be placed.

“The Local Government Board, which is responsible for the carrying out of the Act, ‘fixes the number, age, and sex of the persons who may be allowed to dwell in a canal boat, having regard to the cubic space,

ventilation, provision for the separation of the sexes, general healthiness, and convenience of accommodation of the boat.'

"The effect of the Act will be that, according to Mr. Smith's statement, 70,000 children will be brought under the Education Acts, and, of course, as the children must be on shore to attend school, the women and younger children will gradually be withdrawn from the boats. We say will be, but at present there is no prospect of these desirable results following. Although the authorities have had more than a year to prepare for the Act, it is a fact, vouched for by Mr. Smith, who has made personal inquiries along the banks in different parts of the country, and supported by the testimony of barge-owners and others, that up to a very recent date no single boat had been registered, nor any preparation made for carrying out the Act. The registration is to be enforced by the various urban sanitary authorities, who are supposed to appoint inspectors for the purpose; and judging from a mild and weak remonstrance from a 'Metropolitan Inspector,' to letters of complaint from Mr. Smith and others, we suppose one or two such appointments have been made. But the operation of so wise and useful a measure must not be left to the unexhausted energies, or the unemployed time of some local sanitary inspectors, though these may be usefully engaged under superior inspection. The Act requires the undivided time and attention of some three or four properly qualified inspectors, responsible for well defined districts, and subordinate to one ruling head; and without some such controlling power that shall set in motion the urban authorities, this most necessary and important Act will become a dead letter. We venture to think the matter is simple and obvious, and the Government, which deserves credit for passing so wise a measure should take the necessary steps to make it efficacious by appointing Mr. George Smith as chief inspector to carry out an Act to promote which he has laboured in a spirit of such noble self-sacrifice for many years. The ways and means are as obvious as the necessity for such an appointment; the registration fee for each boat is 5s. per annum, so that if properly looked after, these 25,000 boats will bring in enough to provide for a thoroughly efficient enforcement of the Act, and leave a good balance for the Exchequer besides."

The following article is taken from the *General Baptist Magazine* for March, 1879 :—

“MR. GEORGE SMITH AND OUR CANAL POPULATION.

“MESSRS. HAUGHTON & Co., of 10, Paternoster Row, London having just issued, in their usual excellent style, and at a very reasonable rate, a second and greatly enlarged edition, with Supplement and Appendix, of ‘Our Canal Population,’ by Mr. George Smith, of Coalville, the present is an opportune moment for a few observations concerning the aim and object of the work in question, and the indefatigable exertions of its large-hearted and philanthropic author. Mr. Smith, though disclaiming any pretensions to author-craft or fine writing, has succeeded in bringing to the notice of Christian England one of the darkest chapters which a careful study of our entire social system, in all its ramifications, could disclose.

“By means of the cheerfully accorded co-operation of the all-powerful Press, by frequent platform utterances, and by the careful and laborious preparation and reading of exhaustive ‘papers’ before different learned bodies, Mr. Smith has been enabled to call public attention to an evil in our very midst, the gravity and extent of which few, if any, had any previous conception. We have been frequently told that ‘the world is full of poetry unwrit,’ and no doubt such is really the case ; but Mr. Smith, in his book, makes use of a much homelier, more prosaic, but quite as forcible an expression, when he says that it has been his experience, over and over again, in visiting our courts and alleys in town, and the boat cabins on our canals, that ‘one half the world doesn’t know how the other half lives.’

“One feature in Mr. Smith’s character I have always greatly admired—I refer to that utter forgetfulness of self, and perfect disregard of his own personal and pecuniary interests when endeavouring to rescue the perishing, and lift up the fallen. Most emphatically may it be said that this is *not* ‘that pride which apes humility,’ but a genuine spirit of self-abnegation which very few people can really and truly claim to possess. In his introduction the author

states that at the request of many friends, and with a desire to lessen some of the misery and hardships of the poor boat women and children, 'I send this edition, with all faults and failings, into the world, amongst friends and *foes*—with the aid of the press seconding my humble efforts as heretofore—backed with prayers and tears, to tell its own pitiable story, as the facts and suggestions herein contained may supply the influence and motive power.'

"When these facts and suggestions come to be carefully read, I feel persuaded that those who do so will not only join their prayers and mingle their tears with those of the author, but will at once be ready to exclaim, 'Can such a man as this have a single enemy on earth?' Nevertheless it is a painful fact that Mr. Smith has had to face the persecutions and misrepresentation of men who, I regret to add, have even followed him to the lobby of the House of Commons, and thought to thwart him there. But the Canal Boat Act was passed in 1877, and came into operation on the 30th of June, 1878, and it now remains, says Mr. Smith, 'for the inspector, minister, and teacher to do their part in removing this blot from England's escutcheon of Bible Christianity.'

"I cannot conclude this extremely imperfect notice without venturing to anticipate what, I am sure, will be the first question of all those who read Mr. Smith's book, and this I will at once do by saying that, up to the present time, that gentleman has received no appointment to superintend the proper carrying out of the Act, for the eventual securing of which he laboured so assiduously, made so many heavy pecuniary sacrifices, and subjected himself to many and great inconveniences, amounting, in some cases, almost to personal violence from his opponents. Verily the world knows but little of its best men, and it unfortunately too frequently happens, as in such cases as Mr. Smith's, when they become known their merits and services receive but scant notice. Mr. Smith's book should command an extensive sale amongst, and recommend itself to, all who have a heart to care for its burning words, so that in this way the missionary zeal of the country may be stirred up to help on the cause the author has so much at heart.

"JOHN HIND."

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THE ORIGATION OF THE "GEORGE SMITH FUND."

ON Tuesday, March the 4th, 1879, I went down to the House of Commons to see Mr. Pell, M.P., about presenting a petition to the Home Secretary to get the sentence of a man reduced who was undergoing penal servitude for life for a poaching affray; and on my way across the lobby I met Mr. J. Corbett, M.P. for Droitwich; after some conversation about the Canal Boats Act, the conversation turned upon more personal matters, and the following is an extract from my diary with reference to what he said regarding myself. "He—Mr. Corbett—said, that the Government ought, and should long ago, have given me the carrying out of the Act. Failing that he said I ought to have something substantial given me for the work I had done in getting the Act passed, in the shape of 200 acres of good land in Derbyshire, or some other good county, and I was to get two or three gentlemen to head the thing, and he would give it a lift." This came upon me by surprise, and, thinking he meant it as a joke, I said, "Oh, yes, you mean, I suppose, 200 acres of land in Zululand or Cyprus." "No," he said with a smile, "I mean what I say." Still thinking that he meant it as a joke, I named the matter to Mr. Clayden, Mr. Lloyd, and a few other friends, who advised me to see Mr. Corbett again, to ascertain from him if he really meant what he said. Accordingly I went to the Reform Club the next day, and just came across Mr. Corbett and Mr. W. E. Price, M.P., as they were standing in the hall. I told them my errand, and asked Mr. Corbett again if he really meant what he said with reference to the 200 acres of land referred to the previous evening. More emphatically than before he said, "Yes, I meant what I said." Upon this I asked their advice upon the matter, and what steps should be taken; they said I "ought to go to

the Right Hon. W. E. Forster, M.P., and mention the matter to him, and tell him what has passed between us." I went to see Mr. Forster on the 6th inst. and told him the whole circumstance. He said it was a thing that ought to be done, for I richly deserved it, and he would be a subscriber to the fund; and he also advised me to get a friend to draw up a circular setting forth the objects, and also to get Lord Aberdare to be the chairman. This was done, the circular was sent out under the sanction and supervision of Mr. Forster, and the following is the result of a meeting held on March the 29th, as taken from the *Leeds Mercury*, March the 29th, and which also appeared in the *Record*, *Daily News*, *Daily Chronicle*, *Christian*, *Nonconformist*, *Echo*, *Weekly Times*, and nearly all the papers in the country. If my friends succeed in their object, so far so good. It will make the path of myself and family a little smoother, and the road a little easier; but if they do not succeed as they desire, it will make no difference to me. I shall still work on in the cause of the poor children, as I have been doing the last 17 years. "Trusting in God, and keeping my powder dry," is my motto.

"Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. The Lord God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet."—Habakkuk, chap. iii. v. 17—19.

"MR. GEORGE SMITH, OF COALVILLE.

"A meeting of gentlemen who have sympathised with the work done by this gentleman, and feel that he should receive some public recognition of his services, was held

yesterday in the rooms of the Social Science Association, London.

"The circular convening the meeting recommended that 'this recognition should take the shape of a provision for Mr. Smith's needs, sufficient to enable him to devote his life to philanthropic work, without the pressure of anxiety for daily bread.' The efforts which have resulted, first in the passing of the Brick-yard Children's Act, in 1871, and next in the enactment in 1877 of the Canal Boats Act, have occupied a large part of Mr. Smith's energies during the past sixteen years. There is reason to believe that Mr. Smith, in prosecuting this noble work, sacrificed an appointment of £450 per annum, with every probability of securing for himself a good position in life, and that he is now without any business occupation or means of livelihood.

"The meeting was attended by Lord Aberdare, Mr. W. E. Forster, M.P., Mr. Burt, M.P., Mr. P. W. Clayden (hon. secretary), Mr. Gurney Sheppard, Mr. Hutton, Mr. Mirams, Mr. B. Clarke, Miss L. T. Meade, Mr. Haughton, Mr. Thompson, Mrs. Bond, and other influential ladies and gentlemen. Letters expressing sympathy with the movement were read from Lord John Manners, M.P., Postmaster General, Mr. Corbett, M.P., Mr. P. Taylor, M.P., Mr. J. Cowen, M.P., Mr. Walter James, M.P., Sir Charles Read, L.L.D., and others.

"Lord Aberdare, who presided, gave a brief sketch of English legislation with regard to factories and workshops as bearing in a very important degree on Mr. Smith's labours in the public interest. He thought that on the whole England was proud of the work that had been accomplished by means of the Factory Acts. Some persons might think that we had been slow to move in a matter which reflected so much discredit on us, but if we had been slow we had been sure, and had not had to retrace our steps. The first efforts in this direction dealt only with textile manufactures where steam or water power was used, and it was considered a great step in advance when such trades as potteries, and fustian cutting were included. Later on a bill was introduced in Parliament which dealt far more comprehensively with the subject, and, amongst other industries, applied to that of brick-making. The legislation of 1864

had left the overlooking of brick-yards employing less than 50 persons to the local authority, and it was found that this overlooking was conducted in a very unsatisfactory manner. It was at this stage that Mr. Smith appeared prominently before the public. He showed that local supervision was totally inadequate, and the matter having been brought prominently before him (Lord Aberdare), as Home Secretary at that time, he introduced a clause in the bill of 1871 giving effect to most of Mr. Smith's recommendations. There was no doubt that the restrictions then brought into force were of great public service, and had prevented a great deal of moral degradation and physical suffering; and it was very gratifying at the same time to learn from the report of the Royal Commission, presided over by Sir James Fergusson, that they had not done injury to the employers. The part which Mr. Smith took in that social improvement was very great indeed. With respect to canal boat legislation, however, the whole credit might be said to belong to him. 'The problem of dealing with the canal boat population was a very difficult one, and appeared insoluble until Mr. Smith aroused public attention to the tremendous and terrible evils connected with canal traffic. It was he who suggested a mode of dealing with it, and it was owing to his exertions that an Act was passed which, if it did not altogether remedy the evils in existence, had at all events laid the foundation for a complete remedy. Having devoted himself in this single-minded way to philanthropic work, it was not surprising that Mr. Smith had exhausted his health and strength, and entirely exhausted his pecuniary resources, and he (Lord Aberdare) did not think that, as a Christian and humane people they would like to allow such a thing to go unrewarded. (Hear, hear.) Mr. Smith had lived the life of a missionary without receiving the recognition which was usually given after a life of missionary labour. They had all a common interest in rewarding a man who had relieved the country from the stigma of permitting a degraded class of people to exist in its midst, and he (Lord Aberdare) believed that when this movement became generally known it would be as generally recognised and generously responded to.

Mr. BURT, M.P., moved a resolution expressive of the meeting's appreciation of Mr. Smith's life labour, which was

seconded by Mr. GURNEY SHEPPARD, and unanimously agreed to.

Mr. W. E. FORSTER, M.P., in moving a resolution to the effect that Mr. Smith deserved a public recognition of his services to the country, said this was not a case of reward in the ordinary sense of that word. To his mind it was the payment of a debt. They were all directly interested in improving the social condition of the lower classes; and Mr. Smith had conferred an obligation on them in giving his time and his energy to such a work. Had it not been for him the attention of the public would not have been directed to the terrible miseries of the people employed in canal boats, and most likely there would have been no beneficial legislation on the subject. He (Mr. Forster) had come in contact with Mr. Smith when he was connected with the Education Department, and he at once felt that he was a man who might have attention paid to him, that he was a man of energy and single-mindedness, whose efforts were sure to be fruitful in good. That they had been fruitful every one now knew. Well, in his efforts for the public good Mr. Smith had entirely exhausted his own means. They were not large at the beginning, for he was a man who depended on his exertions for his livelihood, and to whom time was a matter of the greatest importance. Moreover he had been at considerable expense in outlays, as every one must be who did work of this kind. In these circumstances he (Mr. Forster) was sure that the public, who so much appreciated his services, would come forward liberally and supply him with a modest competence for the rest of his life. They might depend upon it that it would not be given without benefit to the public in the future, for Mr. Smith, having done so much good work for nothing in the past, was not likely to cease in philanthropic labour in the future. (Applause.)

"The motion was seconded by Mr. B. CLARKE (who maintained that Mr. Smith at one time was asked to choose between giving up remunerative employment and giving up the pursuit of philanthropy, and at once resolved on the former alternative), supported by Mr. LEWIS, of the National Lifeboat Society, and unanimously agreed to.

"The Rev. Dr. KENNEDY moved, and Mr. J. LLOYD

seconded the appointment of a committee, with the Right Hon. Lord Aberdare as chairman, and consisting of—

The Most Hon. the Marquis of Hartington, M.P.	O. H. Caygill, Esq., Tourist Agent, G.N.R.
The Rt. Hon. the Earl of Derby.	Benjamin Clarke, Esq., Sunday School Union.
The Right Hon. the Earl of Shaftesbury, K.G.	John Hutton, Esq., <i>Weekly Times</i> .
The Right Hon. the Earl of Aberdeen.	Rev. W. Hudson, <i>The Methodist</i> .
The Right Hon. Lord John Manners, M.P.	Dr. Hardwicke, Coroner for Middlesex.
The Hon. Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, M.P.	Walter Hazel, Esq.
The Right Hon. W. E. Forster, M.P.	Rev. A. A. Isaacs, M.A., Church Vicarage, Leicester.
Sir Charles Reed, LL.D., Chairman of the London School Board.	Rev. J. Kennedy, M.A., D.D.
Thomas Burt, Esq., M.P.	Joshua James, Esq.
John Corbett, Esq., M.P.	Herbert Johnson, Esq.
S. W. Clowes, Esq., M.P.	John Lloyd, Esq.
Joseph Cowen, Esq., M.P.	John Lobb, Esq., <i>Christian Age</i> .
W. U. Heygate, Esq., M.P.	Arthur Lockyer, Esq., <i>The Graphic</i> .
W. H. James, Esq., M.P.	R. C. Morgan, Esq., <i>The Christian</i> .
C. G. Merewether, Esq., Q.C., M.P.	Miss L. T. Meade, Author of "Water Gipsies."
A. J. Mundella, Esq., M.P.	Augustus Mirams, Esq., Barrister-at-Law.
Alex. McArthur, Esq., M.P.	The Rev. Mark Guy Pearse, Author of "Rob Rat."
W. E. Price, Esq., M.P.	R. W. Pike, Esq.
P. A. Taylor, Esq., M.P.,	Dr. B. W. Richardson, M.A., F.R.S.
The Rev. S. Anthiff, D.D.	Thomas Robinson, Esq., Mayor of Newcastle-upon-Tyne.
W. H. S. Aubrey, Esq., <i>Capital and Labour</i> .	Rev. A. Rowland, LL.B.
J. W. Allingham, Esq., <i>Christian Globe</i> .	Samuel Gurney Sheppard, Esq.
Rev. C. H. Bullock, B.D., <i>Hand and Heart</i> .	Rev. R. Spears, <i>Christian Life</i> .
Rev. R. C. Billings, M.A., Spitalfields Rectory.	T. B. Smithies, Esq., <i>British Workman</i> .
W. Bradshaw, Esq., <i>Leicester Daily Post and Nottingham Journal</i> .	J. W. W. Thompson, Esq.
Thomas Blower, Esq., <i>Builders' Weekly Reporter</i> .	Rev. B. Waugh, <i>Sunday Magazine</i> .
	Rev. W. J. Woods, B.A.
	Bingham Watson, Esq.

"The meeting closed with a vote of thanks to the chairman, proposed by Mr. Clayden.

"Subscriptions to the 'George Smith Fund' may be sent to F. A. Bevan, Esq., Messrs. Barclay, Bevan, and Co., 54, Lombard Street, London, E.C.

The following appeared in the May number of that excellent monthly publication *The Sunday Magazine*, 1879, the writer of which is personally unknown to me :—

“THE FRIEND OF OUR CANAL POPULATION.

“We are very glad to observe that, under the presidency of Lord Aberdare, a fund is being raised on behalf of Mr. George Smith, of Coalville, Leicester, in order to enable him to prosecute his important labours on behalf of our canal population. For many years Mr. Smith has devoted himself with intense and self-sacrificing enthusiasm to practical efforts on behalf of some of the most helpless, ignorant, and unfortunate sections of our working people. He laboured so persistently, and appealed so effectively for the children and women employed in brick-yards, with whose sorrows, miseries, and hardships he had made himself familiar, that in 1871 he secured the passing of the Brick-yards Act, which has, we believe, done much to remedy the scandalous state of things which he unveiled to public gaze. Now he has been striving with equal zeal to ameliorate the condition of the people, especially the women and children, whose lives are spent chiefly on twenty-five thousand boats which convey our merchandise along the canal and river roads of the country, four thousand seven hundred and ten miles in length. In this pamphlet, published in 1875, Mr. Smith made the startling declaration that ‘there are in this country over one hundred thousand men, women, and children living and floating on our rivers and canals, in a state of wretchedness, misery, immorality and cruelty, and evil training that carries peril with it.’ Public attention was aroused, and writers in newspapers and periodicals urged the necessity of dealing with this great blot upon our Christian civilisation. One consequence was the passing of the Canal Boats Act which came into operation a few months ago. It is feared that the operation of this Act is not so efficient as is to be desired, and that means of enforcing it are wanted which are not provided. It is obvious that, under any circumstances, the active philanthropy and large experience of Mr. George Smith would

find ample scope in the continuous prosecution of personal efforts for the welfare of a class whose true and capable friend he has proved himself to be. We should have thought that he might fitly have been appointed to a Government inspectorship under the Canal Boats Act ; but, in the absence of such an appointment, the public who sympathise with his work, and who can appreciate the importance of its being continued, can supply the necessary means. Mr. Smith has, we believe, entirely thrown away his worldly resources and opportunities for the sake of this truly Christian care for these heathen in our own land. It would be an evil day for our country should it cease to give birth to men of Mr. Smith's self-forgetful passion for 'the ignorant and out-of-the-way,' and scarcely less evil would it be if we should ever fail of men and women who deem it to be their joy and privilege to join in doing substantial honour to such men. We shall be exceedingly glad to convey our readers' contributions to the fund."

Part V.

Pen and Ink Sketches.

THE following is taken from the May (1879) number of *The Biograph*, a monthly publication which is much needed. The articles are well written and very interesting, and the enterprising proprietor and editor richly deserves the success he merits. Both the writer of the articles and the proprietor were personally unknown to me until after the notice had appeared in print :—

“GEORGE SMITH, OF COALVILLE.

“PHILANTHROPY in modern days takes many and sometimes fanciful shapes. The majority of the old charities of which England is so proud, and which have grown with her growth and strengthened with her strength, are derived from death-bed bequests. A taint of the old belief that prompted men to leave money to buy prayers for the repose of their souls may in a measure account for this form of philanthropy—the hope that a good work done when life was ebbing away might atone for sins of earlier days. The desire for fame or notoriety to be acquired by such a display of generosity did not then prevail to any great extent ; a more religious sentiment was evoked, sometimes selfish, sometimes quite unselfish. Here and there history gives us record of men who, through benevolence, devoted their lives to the task of redressing wrong ; but such cases are very rare, and self-denial practised for the purpose of carrying out philanthropic works of national importance was not of frequent occurrence. At the present time legacies form but a proportion of the sums available for charitable purposes, although it is not very long ago that a man who made a

munificent gift for the relief of the working classes of London was lauded to the skies because he parted with his money before his death. Since then, however, it has become a fashion, and a very good fashion too, for people to give of their abundance without waiting until their riches are no longer of any use to them. Parks, squares, libraries, have been presented to the public ; distress abroad and at home is relieved by means of English money, and a subscription at the Mansion House is the popular remedy for any and every calamity.

“ Cases occur now and again where other forms of philanthropy are needed, where the application of the hand to the pocket is not sufficient, and where persistent and well-directed personal work has to be done. It is praiseworthy, but not so very difficult, to practise a little self-denial, and relinquish for a time some personal comfort in order to aid some worthy object, but it is quite another matter to undertake a life-long work solely for the good of others. It is not strange, therefore, that many of the names most revered by us are the names of men who have given themselves such a task. Wilberforce, Howard, Florence Nightingale, and others are accorded as high places as our most famous statesmen and warriors, and will be revered in future ages as they are respected now, and the remembrance of their deeds will never pass into obscurity. It is rather a singular circumstance, however, that the most noted of this class are men and women claiming no identity, save that of sympathy with the wrongs or distresses of the causes they espoused. Almost without exception they have been in a different and far higher social position than that of the class they have relieved, and have had no personal experience of the evils they sought to redress. This fact in no way detracts from the merit of their works, and, indeed, can scarcely be wondered at, for in the majority of cases those who have had brains and perseverance sufficient to enable them to emerge from their bondage have continued their upward course, and have left their fellows to do likewise if they can. Exceptions to this rule are to be met with here and there, and George Smith, of Coalville, the subject of this sketch, is one of the most prominent amongst them, as the following short history of his life, and *résumé* of his efforts to ameliorate the condition of children working in our brick-fields,

and of the men, women, and children employed in our canal-boats, will testify.

"George Smith was born on the 16th February, 1831, at Clayhills, Tunstall, in Staffordshire, and as nearly the whole of his life has been passed in the Potteries and Coalville, Leicestershire, he may fairly claim to be an authority upon the matters he has brought to so successful an issue. His father, William Smith, was a brick and tile-maker, and for centuries his ancestors occupied one of three workmen's cottages, made out of an old farm-house, having the somewhat grandiose name of 'Canal Hall,' canal or canel coal being found in the neighbourhood, and forming the material of which the 'hall' was built. Deborah Capper, his grandmother, came of an old Cheshire family, and possessed rare sagacity and decision. She was village doctor, village nurse, village missionary, and held besides many other honorary offices requiring superior tact and knowledge. Even at this day, to have been in any way connected with 'good old Deborah Smith' is a sure passport to a welcome in the neighbourhood. Her husband possessed the same characteristics, though she surpassed him in resolution. He also, in spite of his plebeian name, is said to have been well born.* George Smith's earliest instruction was derived from an old woman, a Primitive Methodist, and he was under her charge from his third to his seventh year. Then he was put to work to earn, or in part earn, his own livelihood.

"It was no light toil he was engaged upon, even at that early age, and he had no kind master to prevent his strength being overtaken. Kicks and blows were the inducements held out to him to continue his work. How intense was his suffering at this stage has been shown by his passionate words when, in after years, he had acquired the power to speak, and had compelled an audience to listen to him. When he was nine years old he was made to carry about forty pounds of clay or bricks for thirteen hours daily, and almost without intermission, and in addition he had often to work all night. His case was by no means singular, and his own experience will show the severity of the work im-

* This extract is taken from "*Hanani*," the memoir of William Smith. By the Rev. Dr. Grosart; Bemrose and Sons, Paternoster Buildings, and Haughton & Co., 10, Paternoster Row, London, with steel portrait, price 1s. 6d.

posed on the wretched children in the brick-fields. He says: 'On one occasion I had to perform a very heavy amount of labour. After my customary day's work I had to carry 1,200 nine-inch bricks from the maker to the floors on which they are placed to harden. The total distance thus walked by me that night was not less than fourteen miles, seven miles of which I traversed with eleven pounds' weight of clay in my arms, besides lifting the unmade clay and carrying it some distance to the maker. The total quantity of clay thus carried by me was five-and-a-half tons. For all this labour I received sixpence.' This was after his 'customary day's labour,' after 'carrying forty pounds of clay about the yard for thirteen hours.' Yet he was not harder worked than thousands upon thousands of children of the same age. Surely the bondage of the brickmakers of old was no worse than this.

"In spite of the hardships he was enduring, and his long hours of work and miserable pay, the dauntless perseverance which has formed one of his most prominent characteristics in after-life was early demonstrated in his efforts to obtain a more thorough education than had been acquired, when, little more than an infant, he toddled off to the old woman, probably to be taken care of as much as to be taught. For two years he had to sit up all night twice a week to watch the ovens. This, too, was in addition to that 'customary day's work,' and for the extra labour he received a shilling, which money became his own property. Instead of spending it in any of the thousand-and-one ways boys have of disposing of their pocket-money the whole sum was devoted to his education. This, we believe, was his own choice, and when it is considered how money 'burns a child's pockets,' and how many temptations come before an overworked, neglected child, we get a glimpse of the indomitable energy which would have forced success in any career in which George Smith had embarked. A payment of sixpence a week procured him admission to a night-school, the other sixpence was spent in books. What was attained with so much trouble was not likely to be neglected, and he made the most of his hard-earned opportunities. His writings have no pretence to scholarship or literary merit, but they are pointed, very much to the purpose, full of his own zeal, and free from common grammatical errors. Slowly and

surely he made his way. He was fourteen years in the service of one firm, rising step by step until in 1868 he could give emphasis to his statements by the assertion that he had had the management of extensive colliery works for many years. Mr. Smith was the inventor of a kind of ornamental brick, which has come into general use in the construction of good-class houses. His private labours have, however, been so subordinate to his public work that little more need be said about them.

"In the year 1864 George Smith commenced a correspondence with the Home Office relative to the treatment of children in brick-fields and brick-yards, and without position, wealth, or influential friends to aid him, began a long and tedious warfare against custom and wrong. His life-long acquaintance with his subject gave him a mastery of every detail, and he has said: 'I aim at telling simply a dark chapter in the annals of the poor. Throughout I speak that I do know.' His own hard experience enabled him to describe in words of passionate eloquence the sufferings of the little ones whose champion he had become. In 'A Cry from the Brick-fields,' he writes: 'For there are in this, our own England, brick-toilers and "hard bondages" in brick-making, they are sending Godward sighs, and groanings, and cries of the most tragically sorrowful sort—"sighs," and "groanings," and cries from the midst of ourselves in this so vaunted nineteenth century, that might well bring down our preachers—and others, too—from the pulpit dignities and proprieties, and impel them forth—like unto Moses—to "look" on the "burdens," and catch up the cry of the presently wronged and helpless. May my few words take a grip of some few hearts and consciences!' The influence of popular opinion was first sought in 1868, when a letter was addressed to the *Star*. This was followed by many others in various journals, and additional weight was given to them by leading articles on the subject in many papers, the question being at once considered of national importance. In 1870 Mr. George Smith read a paper at the Social Science Congress at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, which caused even more attention to be given to the matter, and drew down upon his head the wrath of the proprietors of the brick-yards in which he worked as a boy. A rather unseemly public correspondence was carried on between them, Mr. Smith, of course, proving triumphant, but

the language used was not very dignified on either side. In 1871 'The Cry of the Children from the Brick-fields' was published, and thousands were scattered broadcast over the country, and the effect of this appeal was soon apparent. To put it in as few words as possible, Mr. Smith's case was as follows—that there were in English brick-fields and brick-works from 20,000 to 30,000 children of both sexes between the ages of three and seventeen unprotected by the provisions of the Workshops or the Factory Acts; that children of nine years of age were compelled to work thirteen hours daily at arduous bodily labour, that the work was of the most demoralising character, the herding together of children of both sexes, almost from infancy, leading to the grossest immorality and impurity. The kind of work done by the boys has already been stated. The task allotted to young girls between the ages of nine and thirteen was to remove a quantity of clay material, weighing in the aggregate 28 tons, a distance of seven yards, their wages varying from 8d. to 10d. per day, according to their capacity. The elder clay-carrier, usually from fourteen to sixteen years old, had to carry nearly half a hundred weight of brick-clay a distance of twenty-two miles before he earned his day's wages, which did not exceed the munificent sum of 1s. 6d. The work performed by other children was equally severe.

"Out of many hundreds of brick-yard girls whose careers Mr. Smith had personally noted, not more than a dozen became decent and respectable wives. He therefore objected to the employment of girls at all in brick-yards. Another complaint was the absence of Government supervision.

"It needed little eloquence to show the degradation which prevailed in English brick-fields, and the urgent need for legislative interference. Mr. Mundella fully bore out Mr. Smith's words as to the vice that existed, and the report of Mr. Baker, a Government inspector of factories, also gave corroboration.

"Some of the worst evils appear to have been due to the workpeople themselves. The men and women are said to have earned good wages, wages sufficient to keep themselves and families in comfort. In many cases these men and women employed their own children as their assistants, and were therefore responsible for much of the hardship the little ones experienced. Against these arguments the facts

must be taken into consideration that the employment of females in brick-yards was demoralising, and that the parents had passed through the same degrading career, and had become brutalised, and as indifferent to the sufferings of their children as others had been to their own youthful trials. The low tone of morals prevailing throughout the brick-fields would have rendered unavailing any other than legislative attempt at improvement.

The remedy proposed by Mr. Smith for this wretched state of things was the enforcement of the Factory Act in these places, and the exclusion of girls. Hitherto this Act only applied to brick-fields in which fifty or more persons were employed. Where there were less than that number it rested with the local authorities to enforce the Workshops Act of 1867. This Act was intended to prevent the evils Mr. Smith brought to light, but owing to the apathy of the local magnates in the brick-fields districts the statute was virtually a dead letter. The subject was very carefully inquired into by Mr. Redgrave, an inspector of factories, and he stated, in a letter to Mr. Smith, that it was most gratifying to find that their opinions on the matter nearly coincided. By this time public feeling had become unanimous. Encouraging letters were received by the agitator—in the best sense of the word—from Her Majesty, from the Kings of Holland and Belgium, and from the Presidents of France and the United States. The matter was taken up in both Houses of Parliament, and in January, 1872, the labour of many years was brought to a successful close. An Act of Parliament was passed which sent more than 10,000 children from the brick-fields to the schools from which they ought never to have been absent. After nearly ten years of conflict the campaign was at length ended. Single-handed, and with nothing but right on his side, and never varying determination to espouse the cause of those of whom is the kingdom of heaven in their silent, helpless earthly bondage, and with powerful commercial interest opposed to him, George Smith struggled onward, never swerving from his self-imposed task, never shunning bodily or mental labour, neglecting his own aggrandisement, until the cry of the children from the brick-fields had been heard in every house in the kingdom, and happy fathers of happy families were stirred with the generous indignation he felt himself, and gave their aid to release the children

from their serfdom. 'We cannot do too much for our children,' says Mr. Smith.* It may be said of him that no man could do more for them.

"Mr. Smith was little more than forty years old when he scored his first great success as a class reformer. His great energy forbade the idea that he would now sit down and fold his hands to watch the result of the law he had brought about, but it could not have been expected that he would have taken in hand another work of the same kind, affecting a much larger number of persons, equally urgent in its need, and equally ignored by his countrymen. Yet even in the struggle for the Brick-fields Act he was massing facts for a fresh campaign against ignorance, distress and immorality, the people he was about to plead for being the miserable creatures employed in our English canal boats. George Smith evidently observes very closely everything that comes before him, and thinks of what he sees. Most of us are too apt to pass unheeded the misery that lies at our own doors or in the next street, not from want of sympathy, but from want of comprehension and appreciation. We have seen it every day of our lives, and custom has made it so familiar that we hardly believe it exists at all. Sometimes a stranger comes along and points it out, and then we see how blind we have been, and try to relieve it. There appears, too, on the surface an absence of poetry about the charity that begins at home; the poverty, squalor, and vice that are seen in the poorest parts of large towns offend delicate feelings, and the help that might work a reform if so directed takes the form of moral pocket-handkerchiefs and flannel waistcoats for little negroes in the tropics. Distance lends enchantment, and adds sentimentality, if not sentiment; the lazy, dirty, blanketed savages five thousand miles away appear far more interesting and romantic than our own half-starved and sometimes wholly neglected poor at home. It was this power of observation that aroused George Smith into action after a year of rest. His home the greater part of his life had been near a canal, and so his attention was drawn to the character and condition of the people whose life was passed in the inland navigation of England. Everybody has watched the barges floating down a river with

* "Peace Pages for the People." By John Harris, F.R.H.S., "The Cornish Poet," Falmouth.

the tide, or being slowly drawn against the stream, or moving quietly along a canal, towed by an old, worn-out horse or ragged donkey. Inside the barge is a man smoking a black clay pipe ; sometimes the head of a woman, or a child or two, may be seen. There is not much that is picturesque about boatmen when seen on a canal, and having bestowed a glance upon them the living freight passes from memory as the barge passes from the view.

“Many and many a time must George Smith have seen the barges as they floated along the canal, for his house was little more than a hundred yards from the towing-path. Perhaps his attention was first drawn to the canal population by the cruelty they exhibited towards their beasts of burden, for he says that while loading the boats with bricks during the day and minding the ovens during the night he had repeatedly counted the blows inflicted upon the poor animals. Cruelty to animals is a sure indication of a coarse, brutal nature, and generally accompanies cruelty or neglect towards wife and children. Misery, whether of man or beast, never failed to arouse sympathy in George Smith, and the poor horses and donkeys may have caused him to discover the miserable state of their drivers. So he was led to inquire more closely into the condition of things on board our barges, and the result was published October, 1873, in a letter to the London and provincial papers. It was not a summary of hastily gathered facts and surmises, but a truthful, carefully prepared statement, for the matter had been marked out years before for future consideration, and he had been gathering details long before the Brick-fields Act was passed. He estimated the number of persons engaged in inland navigation, men, women, and children, at about 100,000, and subsequent inquiries showed that although it was very difficult to discover the real number, his figures approximated the reality. Only a small proportion of these persons had homes on land ; the majority lived on board, in what were dignified by the name of cabins. Of the children not more than 2,000 attended day or Sunday schools, and of the men only two per cent. could read and write. The cabins in which these families—consisting of a man, woman, and often several children—passed their lives, where they were born and bred, and sometimes where they died, were filthy holes in which there was scarcely room to stand up-

right, many of them being little more than six feet square. Of the demoralisation resulting from the herding together of men, women, and children in such places little need be said ; the evil has been so fully made known that it is unnecessary to say anything now on such a miserable topic. Some of the women were fully alive to the degradation of their position. One female at Paddington said that 'the boatman who first put a woman into a boat-cabin deserved hanging.' These women, however deeply they might feel their misfortunes, had no one to take up their cause. The boating population were outcasts from civilisation, living on the water in the same manner as the workers in brick-fields lived on land. 'Floating gipsies' George Smith called them. It is a singular fact that without going far from his own threshold, certainly without moving from his own neighbourhood, he should have found these two objects for his sympathy, objects whose claim for national aid only needed notoriety to ensure recognition from the disinterested portion of the community. It is not so strange that the claims of the boating population should have been overlooked, because they were so thoroughly alienated from the landmen. They belonged to no parish, had no home nor ties in any particular district, were constantly moving from place to place, and acknowledged few social obligations. If it could not be said of them that their hand was against every man and every man's hand was against them, there was none of the communication that should knit a bond of sympathy between the various classes living upon land, and the result was that the boatmen were forced into a fellowship with each other which did not improve their social condition, and into an attitude of passive hostility to the outer world, which world was very pleased not to be troubled with them. The pay of the boatmen averaged from 16s. to 18s. ; when assisted by their wives they earned from 23s. to 24s. Here and there some were found who lived cleanly, comfortable lives, but they formed a very small proportion of the whole.

"It was the condition of the women and children that excited George Smith's indignation. For them, weak and helpless, and often the victims of brutality, he had the most profound compassion, and the practical Christianity of which his whole life has been a long, unselfish example, was again

shown. His hatred of anything resembling cant or hypocrisy was intense, and the feeble efforts which had heretofore been made to meet the difficulty drew from him words of bitter contempt. In 'Our Canal Population,' which was published in 1875, he asks: 'What is the good of wealthy gentlemen and others building churches and chapels, if energetic means are not taken to bring the people living in garrets and cellars in our own courts and back streets and in our boat-cabins to them? What is the good of sending city missionaries among the boaters to read a chapter or two out of the Bible, on the top of the cabin, to one or two old folk, while there are hundreds of boat-children around them not taught to read and write and fear God? They are growing up in the cabins in the most heathenish ignorance and squalor, receiving the most cruel treatment from the boaters—knocked from pillar to post, thrashed, kicked, and beaten with ropes, sticks, and heavy iron boots, until many of the boys and girls become as stupid as the asses they drive. That family, that church, and that nation that is guilty of neglecting the little ones will certainly bring down upon itself the wrath of God, and they shall not go unpunished. Let us take timely warning, and rescue these miserable women and children from the physical degradation, moral pollution, and unhealthy atmosphere they have to endure in these hot, damp, close, buggy, filthy, and stinking holes, commonly called boat-cabins. It cannot be done, and we must not expect it, by quiet, calm, kind-hearted Christian gentlemen, whose breath would not blow a straw over or make a feather quiver, whose voice is scarcely above a whisper, and who turn their backs on the least danger and difficulty, and prefer walking in the beaten path marked out by others; but it must be men like Howard, Clarkson, Baxter, Latimer, Ridley, Wesley, Whitfield, Clowes, Bourne, Livingstone, and Cobden, and who see no danger and fear no difficulty, in trying to snatch the boatmen and children out of the fire.' Again, he says: 'I highly value the ministers of the Church of England and other Christian churches, but I am thoroughly convinced that if the elevation of our boating population is to be left to them alone, that population will be the worse off at the end of the next twenty-five years than they are now. . . . What is the good of giving Bibles and tracts to those who cannot read?

So, there is nothing for it but for the Government to take up the pitiable case of these poor boat-women and children living on the canals, as it has been doing for the women and children for the last forty years engaged in other branches of industry. . . . I would not willingly offend any one. My only aim is to try to put right a great wrong—to try to elevate 70,000 women, living on and working in connection with our canal-boats floating on our inland canals, to a higher state of education, religion, and morality, and this can only be accomplished by looking at their sad case in all its different aspects and shades, and applying the known sure remedies—the Law and the Gospel.’ George Smith is a Sunday-school superintendent.

“As in his former work, Mr. Smith did not content himself with pointing out the evil, but he also suggested the remedy. His earliest recommendation was that the Elementary Act should be made compulsory, that the Workshops Act should be applied, to prevent children under certain ages working on boats, and that by the Sanitary Act overcrowding on board should be prevented. He advised that no boys under thirteen should be allowed to work or sleep on boats, nor should any girls under eighteen, unless married, live or work on them. Other practical suggestions, such as the appointment of inspectors, were made to ensure the fulfilment of this contemplated Act. The matter was taken up by the press, which had always given warm support to Mr. Smith, and public opinion soon showed that something would have to be done. Many difficulties presented themselves, the roving habits of the boatmen offering obstacles to satisfactory legislation on their behalf, and Members of Parliament, while fully admitting the evil, were unable to see how it could be remedied. Nothing daunted, Mr. Smith first sought for a Royal Commission, but a good many Royal Commissions had been appointed about that time, and each one cost more than £2,000. That attempt failing, he strove to have a clause inserted in the Merchant Shipping Bill, but was again unsuccessful. His next endeavour was to induce the Factory and Workshops Acts Commission to take the matter in hand. This time better fortune was in store, and at length a letter was received from Sir George Young, the secretary, stating that the Commission would sit at Leicester on the 21st June, 1875; when they would be glad to receive

evidence on the 'Canal Population—the Brick-yards Question.'

"The invitation offered by the Commission was, of course, accepted, and Mr. Smith attended the inquiry. The testimony given was of sufficient importance to influence the Government in favour of his views. Matters progressed slowly, for Royal Commissions can never be taunted with undue haste, and at last, on the 24th May, 1877, a Bill was brought in by Mr. Selater-Booth, the President of the Local Government Board, and was read the first time. Hitherto little active opposition had been encountered; of all the people personally interested in the subject not a dozen had raised objections to the scheme. Now, however, that there appeared a probability of it being carried out matters began to wear a more threatening attitude for those who thought they might be unfavourably affected by the change, and Mr. Rylands moved that a Select Committee should be appointed. This course was adopted, and the Committee set to work with vigour, the chairman accompanying Mr. Smith to Paddington, a rendezvous for the boatmen, to obtain personal knowledge of their condition. The ignorance that had prevailed upon the subject may be gathered from the fact that in the House of Commons on one occasion Mr. Forster stated that he 'had been perfectly astonished to learn from the statements of Mr. George Smith, of Coalville, how many of these children there were on canals, and would be glad to hear of some means being devised to educate them.' The chairman went away satisfied that the Bill was a step in the right direction. A petition against it was next presented on behalf of the Canal Association, and Mr. Staveley Hill, M.P., Q.C., was instructed to oppose the measure. The Select Committee was, however, convinced of the necessity for legislation, and asked Mr. Smith if the Bill was satisfactory to him. He replied that it was not all that he could wish for, but that a piece of a loaf was better than no bread, and he thought in time it would accomplish the object he had in view.

"The Bill passed the Select Committee on the 10th July, and on the 12th it was ordered to be printed. Mr. Staveley Hill still opposed it, and a final attempt at opposition was made by Mr. Parnell, who put a motion on the paper that it *was* inexpedient at that late period of the session to proceed

with a measure affecting the interest and welfare of so numerous a class. Then came the historical twenty-six hours' sitting, and towards the end of that sitting Mr. Slater-Booth moved the third reading of the Canal Boats Bill. It passed without opposition. The royal assent was given on the 14th August 1877, and the Act became part of the 'law of the land.' The measure seemed to grapple very fairly with the difficulties surrounding the whole subject, and proper enforcement only is needed to effect a radical change in the character and condition of the canal population.

"That 25th of July, 1877, must have been a proud day for the quondam brick-yards boy. His second great struggle was ended, and its end was a triumph. It had, however, taken four years for the concentrated wisdom of the country to find out how to remedy an evil that was admitted on all sides. So it was, too, with regard to the children in the brick-fields. About nine years of Mr. Smith's life were absorbed in that attempt, and yet the two questions were of vital importance to about 150,000 people. These two Acts—two of the greatest social measures of later years—are the outcome of the disinterested labours of one man, a man without birth, position, wealth, or even great talent to give him importance, nothing but earnestness and determination, well applied. Sometimes the apathy with which his efforts were met aroused his indignation, and it must have been in bitterness of spirit that he wrote, 'Pity, sorrow, and sympathy are very nice things in their way ; so long as they tickle the senses it is pleasing, but so soon as it begins to go below skin deep, and to find a road to their hearts, pockets, and consciences, they turn away with a shrug of the shoulders, and say, "Poor things, they will be better off some day."' Mr. Smith has never sought credit for his work ; he felt that he was only doing his duty, and he was therefore justly indignant when he weighed others in the same balance and found them wanting. Yet no one was more ready to acknowledge aid when aid was given. Assistance and support were rendered by several of the canal companies and canal managers, and to them and to the press Mr. Smith has frequently expressed his gratitude. His reticence concerning his own labours has been remarkable, and scarcely a word has escaped him as to the expenses he has

incurred, although he has been a poor man all his life. He has paid more than £2,000 out of his own pocket to get the Bills passed, and sacrificed an appointment worth £450 a year, which he had held for several years. The only substantial public acknowledgment of his labours seems to have been a purse of a hundred guineas, a Bible, and a piece of plate, and a flattering illuminated address, presented to him after the passing of the Brick-fields Act. A deeper and purer reward is the gratitude of the little ones to whom he has given the best years of his life. Now that he is nearly fifty this man is in distress, the slight pecuniary assistance he has received scarcely amounting to more than would pay the postage of his letters. He never asked for money to assist him in his work, and it was seldom volunteered. It is nothing more than a tardy act of justice that has at last been done. Steps are now being taken to relieve Mr. Smith and his family from want. A meeting was held on the 28th March at the rooms of the Social Science Association, in London, Lord Aberdare presiding, at which Mr. W. E. Forster and other M.P.'s were present, to consider the best way of recognising his services. It is desired to raise a fund to provide for his wants, in order that he may devote the remainder of his life to philanthropic works without the anxiety caused by a struggle for daily bread. Mr. Smith has done the State some service, and services far less valuable have been rewarded by the State; but as Government has not chosen to interfere in this instance, the plan suggested is the best that could be devised. Although the two Bills have been passed, there is still much to be done in connexion with them. The Brick-yards Act is working satisfactorily; the Canal Boats Act only came into effect on the 1st January, 1879, and some supervision is necessary to see that it is properly carried out. The new year had scarcely arrived before Mr. Smith showed his vigilance by taking a five days' journey along the canals in the depth of winter, with snow upon the ground, and the canals frozen up, to see that the law was carried out. A letter of complaint to the daily papers followed, and then a second and third, showing that negligent officials will not have a very happy time while Mr. Smith is alive to look after them.

“W. H. WILTSHIRE.”

“Lives of great men all remind us,
We can make our lives sublime,
And departing leave behind us,
Footprints on the sands of time.

Footprints that perhaps another,
Sailing o’er life’s solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,
With an heart for any fate,
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labour and to wait.”

The following is the dedication of “Rob Rat,” a deeply touching and most interesting story of canal life, 1879, by the Rev. Mark Guy Pearse,* and who is a most popular minister and writer among the Wesleyans. His “Daniel Quorm” will live as long as the English language is spoken.

“To

GEORGE SMITH, Esq.,

Coalville, Leicester,

Whose noble and unflagging efforts on behalf of

THE BRICK-YARD CHILDREN,

AND OF

THE CANAL POPULATION,

Have made his name among the most blessed
of our age.

May the success that has gladdened his heart in the former work, and rescued thousands of little ones from a horrible bondage soon crown his endeavours on behalf of our

BARGEMEN AND THEIR FAMILIES.”

* Wesleyan Conference Office, City Road, and Paternoster Row, London. Price 1s.

The following is a leading article which appeared in the *Nonconformist*, April 9, 1879. Second to none for its outspokenness with reference to either politics or religion.

"MR. GEORGE SMITH, OF COALVILLE.

"WE are often told that one-half the world does not know how the other half lives. And sometimes, perhaps, it is as well that they should not; the knowledge might benefit neither half. But more frequently the ignorance in which men live of each others' life is both the fruit and the occasion of selfishness. It is not only by intention, but through neglect, that 'man's inhumanity to man makes countless myriads mourn.' Only lift the veil and let men, even when they are not over-sensitive, see the wrongs that are endured by their fellows, and hearts and hands will be found ready to haste to the rescue. This Mr. George Smith, of Coalville, did many years ago with reference to the brick-yards in England. And after encountering much incredulity and opposition, he had the satisfaction of seeing the Brick-yards Act passed in 1871. In an address which was presented to him on the occasion, signed by many members of both Houses of Parliament, with a purse of £100, and a piece of plate, we read:—'In bringing about this result singlehanded, you have succeeded in awakening the consciences of our legislature to a frightful evil, and at length you have the satisfaction of seeing this evil largely ameliorated by legislative enactments in the extension of the principle of the Factory Acts to all the brick-fields in the kingdom.'

"This was all very well. But it could not have been known at that time that Mr. Smith, in prosecuting this noble work, had sacrificed an appointment worth £450 per annum. Nothing daunted, however, seeking his reward only in his work, and in the approval of the Great Master, Mr. Smith persevered in the course of practical philanthropy to which Providence seemed to call him. In 1875 he published a pamphlet on 'Our Canal Population,' in which he lifted the veil off another class of which the world practically knew nothing. 'There are in this country,' he told the world, 'over 100,000 men, women, and children, living and floating on our rivers and canals, in a state of wretchedness,

misery, immorality, cruelty, and evil training that carries peril with it.' This pamphlet is now republished, with letters, documents, and facts relating to the history of the legislation which grew out of its publication. Mr. Smith makes no pretence to author-craft or fine writing. But his blunt, outspoken, and unvarnished story, needs only to be read to produce a deeper impression than could be produced by any amount of fine writing. There are in the United Kingdom 4,710 miles of canal and river navigation. In this navigation there are over 25,000 boats, 'carrying human beings of all ages, together with filth, mud, manure, and the refuse of our large towns.' Some of the cabins are models of neatness; but others, by far the greater part, are the most filthy holes imaginable. 'In the boat-cabins—"hell holes" as some of the women call them—people of all ages live day and night. Fathers, mothers, sisters, and brothers, sleep in the same bed and at the same time.'

"In 1877 a Canal Boats Act was passed, and it came into operation on the 2nd of January, 1878. The time is too short to judge of its efficiency. But signs are not wanting that it needs means of enforcement, for which it has not made provision. And Mr. Smith must not go to sleep. Meantime it is satisfactory to find that a committee has been formed, under the presidency of Lord Aberdare, who, as Home Secretary, carried the Brick-yards Act in 1871, to raise a fund by which this good man shall be enabled to persevere in his task. Let our fireside philanthropists now prove that they appreciate those who expose themselves to all manner of adverse winds and weathers in doing good to their fellow creatures. We cannot afford to endure the disgrace of letting Mr. Smith and his family suffer want, through their self-sacrificing zeal on behalf of those whose condition is, to use his own words, 'a blot on our English escutcheon.'"

The following short essay is from the *Hull Miscellany*, for May 1879, edited by Mr. William Andrews, F.R.H.S., and which was read before a large gathering of young men in the Baker-street School-room on one of the "Saturday evenings for the people."

been of a passive nature, to begin the practice of the active graces. No longer be content to fold your hands in pious ease, and think that a prayer is all that is required of you. Here is a work at hand for all who reside near our waterways or their termini. Go amongst the boaters; gather these long neglected children and seek to win them to better ways. Brighten their lives by the exhibition of a kindly disposition towards them. Let not the work which has been so well begun and so nobly carried on by Mr. Smith, stand still or lose its effect for want of helpers. An Act of Parliament can do a great deal towards improving the physical condition, but not much for the morals of a community. Many of the degrading influences of boat-life will now be removed, but there is much work to be done by philanthropists before this portion of the body politic can be elevated morally. We recommend to our readers the careful perusal of Mr. Smith's book, and if it does not cause you to do something for our 'Canal Population' there will be lacking that spirit of self-sacrifice which is such a prominent trait in the author's character, and which is so well worthy of imitation.

"*Hull.*

"JOHN H. LEGGOTT."

The following is a leading article taken from the *English Independent*, May 23, 1879. The writer, with warmth, zeal, and fire, commences with a blaze of rockets, which will give the horrors and cause *delirium tremens* to come over the narrow, carping, selfish, money-grubbing souls, and character-poachers, who have been skulking about my path in the dark for years. I am grieved and truly sorry to find that men who call themselves Christians cannot find better employment. In doing their deeds of darkness they cannot say that they are getting more "Christ-like" as they are getting nearer to the "reckoning-day."

"GEORGE SMITH.

"George Smith! George Smith, of Coalville! His name is ever cropping up in short newspaper paragraphs, appear-

ing in leaders ! Who is he ? The first answer is that his work has covered our country with good unspeakable ; is destined yet to bear richer fruit ; and he himself ought to be well known to every kindly Englishman.

“He had been connected with brickmaking from childhood, and had special opportunities of becoming acquainted with the miseries of unhappy children employed in the brick-fields. He himself, at nine years of age, had to carry some 40lbs. of clay or brick upon his head for thirteen hours a day, sometimes working all night at the kilns, for which severe labour he received the munificent sum of sixpence. Kicks and blows added to the misery. No wonder, then, that he set himself to the emancipation of the children. In 1860 he began the work, and for eleven years slaved at it, collecting and arranging facts, and carrying on a most voluminous correspondence. In 1871 he published ‘The Cry of the Children from the Brick-yards of England,’ which created the utmost excitement in the country by the statement that from 50,000 to 60,000 children of both sexes were employed in the brick-yards, many of them as young as seven years of age, as a rule gravely overworked, many working fourteen and even sixteen hours a day. The result was that an Act of Parliament was passed that very year, wholly prohibiting the employment of boys under ten and girls under sixteen years of age, and enacting that boys under thirteen should be employed only half time. The effect of the Act was to send 10,000 children from the brick-yards home and to school.

“Having accomplished one good work, Mr. Smith could not rest without setting his hand to another. Few have any idea of the thousands of miles to which the canals of England extend, the thousands of boats employed, and the more than 100,000 persons who lived on them. The condition of these people, with some exceptions, was deplorable to the last degree, in the filthiness of their habitations, in their squalid and oft diseased state, in their moral condition—herding like the beasts, no arrangements possible for the decencies of life, the children untaught, neglected, cruelly treated, with no definite authority to which boat or crew was liable. These people were the outlaws of England. No man cared for them—body or soul. To them Mr. Smith’s attention was drawn, and after them went his compassion.

Up and down the great water-ways of England went the philanthropist, that he might know by personal investigation the actual facts. Voluminous correspondence, articles in the *Daily News* and other London papers, in the *Fortnightly*, and in the *Argonaut*, employed all his leisure, as he endeavoured to bring home the facts to the English people. At his earnest entreaty, evidence on the condition of the 'canal population' was taken in 1875 by the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the operation of the Factory Acts.

"Once more he was successful. Attention was constrained to this too long-neglected class. 'The Canal Boats Act' was passed in 1877. It provides for the registration of every canal boat used as a dwelling; gives to the Local Government Board power to fix the number, age, and sex of the persons allowed to dwell on board, having regard to the cubic space, ventilation, provision for the separation of the sexes, general healthiness, and convenience and accommodation of the boat; to promote cleanliness, and prevent infectious diseases. The Act makes provision, too, for bringing the children under the Elementary Education Acts of 1870, 1873, and 1876. Meanwhile the hearts of philanthropists were everywhere stirred, missions were instituted all over the country for the good of the canal population, and individuals, according to their opportunity, stretched forth their hands to help.

"But the one thing necessary to make the legislation efficient was to appoint an inspector, to see that the Act was carried out. The inspector should have been that one man in England who knows all about the canal people, and who is, on the whole, recognised by the canal folk as their sincere and earnest friend. Mr. Smith's appointment might have cost the country not a single sixpence, for a small fee for the registration of each boat would have provided a good salary for the inspector, with a surplus, after paying all expenses, to come into the national treasury. But the thing seemed not good to Mr. Selater-Booth. Again and again, in public and in private, has the matter been pressed on his attention, and by very influential persons, too. Why has Mr. Smith not been appointed? Is it because, as Mr. Bright says, the Government is 'imbecile at home and turbulent and wicked abroad?' Have prejudices gathered against the faithful

worker during twenty years which have become influential in the Tory upper air? Is Mr. Smith too plebeian? We know him for a manly Englishman, with a big heart, but he certainly is no relation to Lord Dundreary. He is an earnest Christian. Can it be that this has blocked his way? All these causes may have combined to remit the great philanthropist to oblivion. Unfortunately, we know only too well what Toryism is. Not thus would it have been, we have good reason to know, had Liberal statesmen been in power. Even as it is, some of them have not been slow to plead with the Government to at once recognise Mr. Smith's claims and further his objects. But no!

"Nor is this all. Philanthropy is comparatively cheap to some people of ample private means and assured position, but it costs others very dear. It is no secret that Mr. Cobden sacrificed everything for that Free Trade which some would just now like to tamper with, and for this reason the munificent sum of £70,000 was raised for him. Mr. Smith has sacrificed all for the children of our brick-fields and canals. He has spent thousands of pounds out of his own pocket, for he was never backed by any society; he fought the battle of their emancipation single-handed, and to carry on the work had some years since to give up a situation worth £450 a-year. Since that time he has been, we regret to learn, in a most painful and anxious position.

"We rejoice, therefore, to note that a meeting was recently held in the rooms of the Social Science Association, to raise a subscription for presenting Mr. Smith with a testimonial in recognition of his services. The principal speakers were Lord Aberdare, the Right Hon. W. E. Forster, M.P., and Mr. Burt, M.P., and the result was that a committee was formed, of which Mr. W. P. Clayden is secretary.

"From the Queen downwards, all classes in many ways have shown their interest in the noble man and his beneficent work. Letters and memorials signed by peers, bishops, members of the House of Commons, magistrates, ministers, solicitors, engineers, and manufacturers, testify to this fact. It must not, however, be concluded that efforts on the part of his earnest friends are, therefore, uncalled for. Every one who feels for the condition of a class all but hopelessly degraded, and is grateful to their champion and deliverer,

has now an opportunity of contributing to the 'George Smith Fund,' and we trust that the call will be liberally responded to. When the new Liberal Government, now so anxiously looked for, comes into power, Liberal statesmen will doubtless see that Mr. Smith's energy, knowledge, and large experience are not allowed to waste, and that the Canal Boats Act of 1877 is no longer a dead letter.

"HENRY T. ROBJOHN, B.A."

The following article is taken from *The Graphic* relating to the portrait of my humble self which appeared on May 24th, 1879. See title page. I would much rather it did not appear within these pages. It is the children! The cause of the children! The education and protection of the women and children! I want to the front. However, my publishers insist upon it and I must submit.

"GEORGE SMITH, OF COALVILLE,

"The Brick-yard and Canal-Boat Children's Friend."

"This well-known philanthropist, to whom the brick-field and canal-boat children owe a deep debt of gratitude, was born at Clay-hills, Tunstall, Staffordshire, in 1831. His father was a brick and tile maker, and George himself, after attending a dame-school for some time, was set to work at the age of seven to earn his own livelihood by carrying the clay and bricks to and from the makers to the drying floors and kilns. When only nine years old he had to carry about forty pounds of clay for thirteen hours daily, and besides this to sit up all night twice a week to watch the ovens. Yet in spite of these long hours of heavy labour for a child of such tender years he managed to work overtime, and devoted the whole of his extra earnings (one shilling per week) to the purchase of books and paying for admission to a night-school. The education thus attained, though by no means brilliant, was sufficient to enable him in after years to set forth in fervent emphatic language the wrongs and

sufferings of the poor brick-yard children, among whom he himself had laboured. For ten long years he advocated their cause, keeping the subject constantly before the public mind by persistent letter-writing to various periodicals, by speeches at public meetings, and by repeated applications to Parliament and the Home Office. His determined and patient efforts at last met their reward, when in January, 1872, 10,000 brick-yard children were taken from their slavery and sent to the schools. The achievement of this victory gave him new courage, and it was not long before he was again in the field, fighting for the miserable and helpless children of the Canal Boatmen, 'Floating gipsies' as he called them. Again he pleaded with rough untutored eloquence, describing with faithful portraiture the insanitary and often immoral conditions in which those people lived, and again his earnest patient zeal was rewarded with success by the passing of the Canal Boats Act in July, 1877. With the modesty which ever accompanies true worth, George Smith has never claimed any credit for these great works, and has scarcely ever alluded to the expense which he incurred although he has been a poor man all his life. He has spent more than £2,000 out of his own pocket, and sacrificed an appointment worth £450 a year in order that he might devote himself entirely to the work. The only substantial public acknowledgment of his labours has been the presentation of a testimonial consisting of 100 guineas and a piece of plate, and now we hear that he and his family are almost in positive distress. This being the case, an influential committee, of which Lord Aberdare is chairman, has been publicly appointed to collect subscriptions for a testimonial fund, and it is confidently hoped that the sum collected will be such as to place Mr. Smith beyond the reach of want for the remainder of his life."

THE END.

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A

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